Week ending December 7 1957 *Every Wednesday Fourpence*

JOHN BULL

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS ISSUE

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by Sir James Barrie

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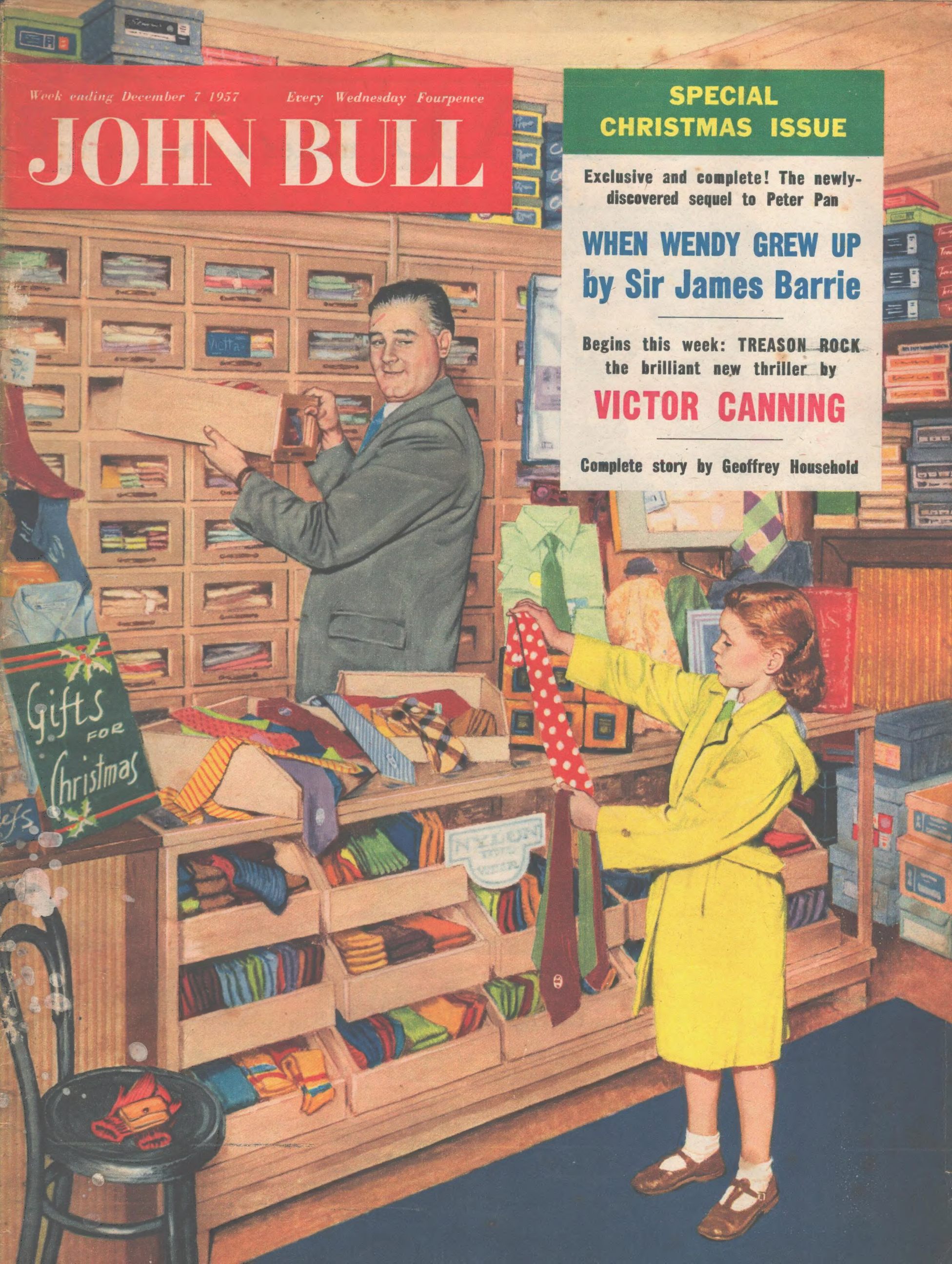
VICTOR CANNING

Complete story by Geoffrey Household



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CHANCERY 3344 DECEMBER 7, 1957 VOLUME 102 NUMBER 2684

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REPORT FROM THE EDITOR

Geoffrey Household: an odd job man became a writer

A WOMAN walked into an inn in Essex and announced that she had just bought a rare Greek drinking bowl. The customers gathered round and then, carrying the drinking bowl aloft, they accompanied the owner on a felicitous—but completely respectable—marathon pub-crawl. That, says Geoffrey Household, who heard all about it the morning after, was how he got the idea for his story *The Night The Colonel Sank*, which begins on page 26.

Most of the ideas for Household's dozen novels and scores of short stories come from his war experiences and from travels all over the world. Films have been made of three of his novels; *Rogue Male*, which was called *Man Hunt* for the cinema, *Rough Shoot* and *Brandy For The Parson*. *Fellow Passenger*, which we serialized in 1955, has been sold to a film company.

During the war Household married his Hungarian-born wife Ilorna. Today they live with their three children, Geoffrey (fifteen), Nicolette (thirteen) and Annacelia (four), in a modern farmhouse at Great Horwood in Buckinghamshire.

Before he became a full-time writer in 1936, Household was a banker in Rumania, a commercial traveller on the Continent—"and all sorts of other odd things." He is still as versatile as ever. A few years ago he was asked if he would contest a seat on Brentford and Chiswick Council for the Conservatives, who were unable to persuade anybody else to stand. "I had no politics or local government knowledge so I accepted. To my astonishment we won."

THE scene was London on a misty autumn evening in 1904. The curtain rang down on the last performance of James Barrie's play *Little Mary*, and the author was backstage talking to a pretty, sprite-like actress whose brilliant performance he had been watching. "I have a part for you in my new play," he said.

That was Hilda Trevelyan's first brief meeting with Barrie. It was also her introduction to the excitement surrounding the first production of Barrie's masterpiece *Peter Pan*. "We rehearsed scene by scene, never knowing what was coming," says Miss Trevelyan.

At the theatre Barrie often treated the child-part players as children. "Once," says Miss Trevelyan, who was then in her twenties, "he stopped Peter and me, and slipped two shilling pieces into our hands." Hilda Trevelyan played Wendy a thousand times, and established herself as one of the great actresses of her day. To her Barrie presented the manuscript of his sequel, which begins on page 28.

Now she lives with her dramatist husband Sydney Blow in a cottage in the Chilterns, and as a vice-president of the Ladies' Theatrical Guild maintains a close interest in the theatre. Her last stage play was *The Housemaster*, in 1938. She made one film, *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, and appeared once on television. Appropriately, she has stayed young long enough to bridge the gap between the world of Ellen Terry and Henry Irving and the era of TV.

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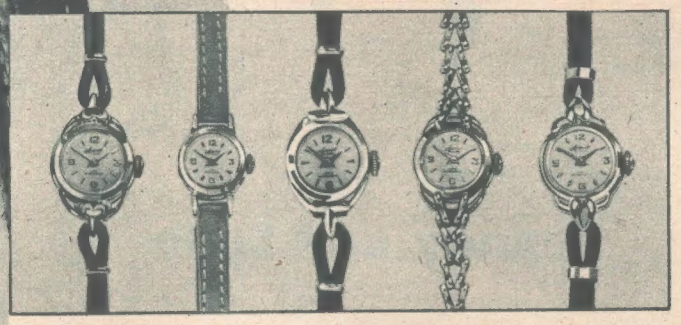

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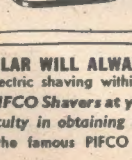

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Free Speech

- **Putting our wives into the picture**
- **When it's better not to follow father**
- **Good neighbours who are a nuisance**

LAST year my firm held a Christmas party with a difference. Our wives were invited for the first time, and instead of the usual riotous gaiety we watched a film about the factory.

There was also a talk by the managing director who explained the importance of a sales drive in Canada which had been keeping us working at top pressure for weeks.

The whole object was to give our wives an idea of our problems—and our hopes and fears for the firm's future. "Wasn't that a fine idea?" I said when we got home.

"What a stupid way to run a party!" said my wife.—L. V., Petts Wood, Kent.

Open Closure

In a village shop I saw a printed notice stating that, under the Shops Act, the store was closed except for the sale of cream, milk, bread, confectionery, flowers, fruit, vegetables, articles of a perishable nature, tobacco, smokers' requisites, newspapers, periodicals, medicines, surgical appliances, motor and cycle accessories.

I wonder what they sell when they're open.—R. C. HORWOOD, Olney Road, Lavendon, Bucks.

O.K. For Sound

I sympathize with Miss Elsie Roden of Manchester who complains that men block her view of the cinema screen by their continual search for cigarettes, matches and money ("Free Speech," November 16).

She should follow my example and always sit behind two women. Then she needn't look at the screen at all. The action will be explained in detail as it takes place.—W. GORE, West Street, Newbury, Berkshire.

Irish English

In the past few years I have asked several students from France and Spain why they are visiting Dublin. They say that it's because they believe that the purest form of the English language is spoken here.

I'm happy to report that we Dubliners don't allow this fact to disturb us unduly. We continue to ride our cycycles down O'Connell Street and eat our herrins and whitenins on Fridays. We are always ready to dance to the melojum, the harmojum or even the grannyphone as long as our various veins will stand the strain.

An enterprising cake firm recently tried to introduce a Parisian note with

its wares, but sure we took it all in our stride—and them French gachews is gorgeous, you know.—MISS AMANDA MAY, Hollybank Road, Dublin.

Frustrating Footsteps

People who know that I work for my father in our family business are always a little envious. "It must be nice to have the boss in your own family," they say.

In fact, it works out quite differently. I work a far longer day than anyone I know, my holidays are always out of season, and my pay rises don't come in hard cash, but in gifts, generously donated by my relatives. I'm resigning from the family firm next month, and I'm taking a job where my pay and my free time are my own. And I think I shall enjoy not being on level terms with the boss.—J. K., Brighton, Sussex.

Selective Sparrows

When I threw some breadcrumbs from the window of my ground-floor office in the country they had barely touched the ground before the first of a flock of sparrows arrived.

Shortly afterwards, while several of the sparrows were clearing up the remnants, I threw a handful of cigarette ends from the same window. Not a bird moved. How did they

know that the second shower was not, like the first, a free lunch?—RICHARD E. COOK, Manor Road, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire.

"The only certainty is that they weren't using their sense of smell," says an ornithologist, "because, with the possible exception of geese, birds haven't any. Many birds can be fooled surprisingly easily. Robins will react violently to a stuffed robin or even a bundle of red and white feathers but ignore completely a stuffed robin with its red breast dyed brown."

Form Number 999

I recently served an eighteen-month prison sentence and mentioned this on the income tax form I had to fill in shortly after obtaining a respectable job.

A few days later I got another form and a note asking me where I had worked for the previous year. I repeated the information and ignored two more forms which followed. When the third arrived I decided to settle the matter once and for all and filled it in as follows:

State where you worked prior to your present employment.—Walton Prison.

What type of work were you doing?—Stitching mailbags.

Give clock number, if any—Convict number . . .

What were your average earnings?—1s. 7d. a week.

I gleefully posted the form. Today, I received yet another form with a note asking, "Was tax deducted?" M. M., Bristol.

Drop In Courtesy

I've had the misfortune to move into a "good neighbour" district where everyone is on the best of terms—on the surface at any rate—and where cheerful friends are inclined to drop in with the latest gossip when you are trying to have a quiet evening.

Common politeness prevents me from letting them know that I can't stand their nattering small-talk and that I would much rather read my

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

that's a nice thought

Old England *shirts*

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Player's Mild

are full of flavour

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[PM 108]

Free Speech

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

book. Our grandfathers had a strict code of manners which protected them from this sort of thing without giving offence or getting them socially ostracized for being unfriendly.

They even had certain days of the week when they were officially "at home" to receive visitors. I'm all in favour of it.—P. D., Ripon, Yorkshire.

The First Spy

Your stories about Nazi spies in Britain reminded me of the case of Carl Hans Lody, who did much of his spying in Edinburgh and was the first German spy to be shot in the Tower of London during the first World War. I was chief witness for the prosecution. — MRS. JESSIE M. ROBERTS, Fairfield Street, Ardwick, Manchester, 12.

Lody was executed in November, 1914, having travelled in Britain on an American passport spying on naval bases and mobilization activities. But he had been suspected from the first and the only report that is reputed to have been let through to Germany arose from the famous rumour which swept Britain at the time: that Russian soldiers were passing through "with snow still on their boots."

. . . The description of the wartime activities of the German yachtsman, Captain Christian Nissen, who was a member of the Royal Ocean Racing Club before the war, reminds me of the neat way in which he once tricked the British Navy.

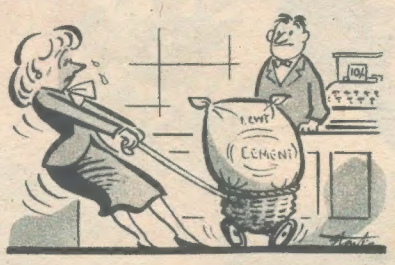
He was sailing back from South Africa, having landed a German agent, when a British destroyer approached. Nissen, hoisted an American flag, assumed a convincing American accent and drawled: "How's the war going, boys?" "O.K.," was the reply.

Nissen got a cheer from the British sailors as the destroyer turned away, its officers satisfied that Nissen was what he seemed to be.—A. H. P., London.

Hiding The Expense

I recently paid 1s. 6d. for a cardboard container of cement. It weighed four pounds, which works out at £2 2s. a hundredweight. If I'd wanted a hundredweight it would have cost less than 10s.

We expect to have to pay more for smaller quanties because of packaging, but over £1 10s. more is too



much. I wonder how many more "atoms at a mighty price" there are on the market. — MISS M. EDWARDS, Holywell, Flintshire.

. . . Many matchboxes no longer carry a statement of quantity, such as "Average contents 50." These statements should be required by law, as with other commodities, to prevent hidden profit and price increases through gradual reduction in quantities.

If manufacturers are allowed to take undue advantage of inflationary trends we'll soon be buying matchsticks by the dozen.—E. W., Bath, Somerset.

Barbaric Londoners

Englishmen in general are fond of referring jocularly to us Scots as "barbarians." After a few weeks of mixing with my superior neighbours I suggest that the boot is on the other foot—where manners are concerned, at least. I know every major city in Scotland and I'm sure that I've never seen anything there as degraded as the elbowing, teeth-bared struggle which goes on in London's Oxford Street during rush-hour scrambles for buses.

"Gentlemen" push ladies into the gutters, and other "ladies" argue

shrilly with conductors and among themselves about queue-jumping. A sad spectacle, cousins. I shudder to think of being aboard a sinking ship with you.—GEORGE CAMERON, Mansell Road, Acton, London, W.3.

Taxing The Cheque

The twopenny stamps on cheques should be abolished. Unlike the poundage on postal orders, which is justified by the cost of the postal order system, the cheque stamp is a straight tax paid in addition to bank charges.

Increasing numbers of people are being paid through banking accounts nowadays and are using cheques for everyday payments. Why should they be taxed on the movement of their money? Cash transactions and savings bank withdrawals carry no similar penalty.—S. WILMOTT, Bath, Somerset.

Boy In A Scrape

My husband recently witnessed an episode which I think throws a strong light on one aspect of today's moral values.

A woman and her young son were walking down a street lined with cars, many of them almost new. The child, with his hand held like a claw, was scraping the side of every car he passed, with obvious results.

As they drew level with my husband he heard the mother say: "Don't do that, Davey, there's a good boy. You might break your nails."—MRS. J. M. CHITTY, Park Wood Road, The Ridge, Hastings, Sussex.

Moan At Moaners

We've read "Free Speech" frequently during the past few years and would like to add our support to all those who write suggesting the abolition of cliff climbing, amateur sailing, driving too fast, driving too slowly, hunting, shooting, fishing, jay walking, excessive talking, drinking and eating, fireworks, Christmas cards, being beastly to children or pets and being over-enthusiastic about pets or children.

We should also like to add to this list a complete abolition of eating, drinking and breathing for everybody but ourselves—and maybe the staff of JOHN BULL. Then perhaps we might be able to lead peaceful lives with no abolitions at all.—R. S. and H. C. BINGHAM, Bristol.

Organized Friendship

I agree with P. S. of Chichester that few people bring back more than a superficial knowledge of a foreign country from their holidays abroad ("Free Speech," November 9). But I feel that many of them would be glad to entertain foreigners in their own homes in exchange for a return visit if a bureau were set up for this purpose by one of our travel organizations.

My husband and I recently entertained two Yugoslav teachers whom we met by accident on Paddington

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

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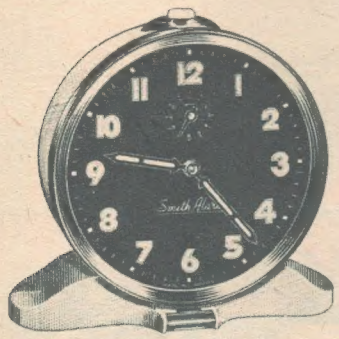

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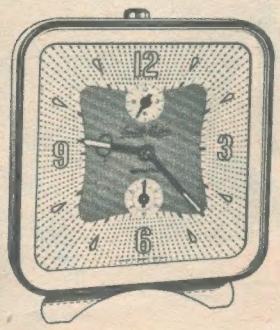

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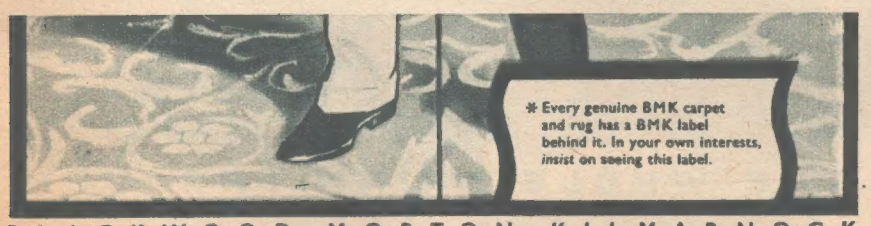

* Every genuine BMK carpet and rug has a BMK label behind it. In your own interests, *insist* on seeing this label.

BLACKWOOD MORTON KILMARNOCK

Free Speech

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Station when they were looking for somewhere to stay. In return we were treated to overwhelming Slav hospitality in their home town of

Split, on the Dalmatian coast. We felt that we had gained an insight into their lives and they into ours.

But why should such meetings be left purely to chance?—MRS. JOYCE RUSSELL, St. Stephens Gardens, Bayswater, London, W.2.

Recipe For Housewifery

Domestic science classes in schools are all very well, but a good recipe book, common sense and practice in your own home are far better. Instead of spending time learning how to clean silver, wash hairbrushes and bake simple cakes and tarts I wish I'd been taught how to shop properly and to deal with door-to-door salesmen.

It's only now, after three years of marriage, that I can pluck up courage to obtain exactly what I want from a food shop, and to send away door salesmen who formerly plagued the life out of me and sold me things which I didn't need.—MRS. E. JOHN, Ringwood Avenue, Leeds 14, Yorkshire.

"Unfortunately, bitter experience is the best builder of sales resistance," says a domestic science teacher. "But I always stiffen my own with the thought that door-to-door salesmen take a mean advantage of the fact that I'll probably be too polite to slam the door in their faces. If I once feel sorry for the eager young man with the gadgets, I'm lost."

Lucky Dogs

The correspondents who complained about the six months' quarantine for dogs entering Britain can't realize how lucky they are to live in a country that's free from rabies.

Here in Northern Rhodesia people have died after being bitten by rabid dogs, and many others have had to have courses of injections which are far from pleasant.

During rabies outbreaks we have "tie up" orders. All dogs have to be kept in the houses, and any found running free in gardens or streets are liable to be shot by the police. This can go on for two or three months. But the greatest fear is for our children, who might pet a rabid dog in the street before its symptoms are visible.

It's now compulsory for all dogs to be inoculated, but the disease has by no means been wiped out. So don't waste any sympathy on dogs in quarantine. They're well looked after. — MRS. MARGARET WRIGHT, First Street, Broken Hill, Northern Rhodesia.

Secret Discipline

A girl was recently fined for stealing 7s. 6d. from a till, with the consequent shame to herself and her family when the affair was published, with her full name and address, by the local press. She had strongly denied the accusation.

We frequently hear of a doctor, dentist or chemist systematically robbing the exchequer of much larger sums. But comparatively small fines are imposed and the names and addresses of the delinquents are never published. Why this difference in treatment?—A. B., West Norwood, London, S.E.19.

"These doctors, dentists or chemists aren't usually committing a crime," says the Ministry of Health, "but failing to comply with the terms of their agreements with the National Health Service. Disciplinary action is, therefore, similar to that which might be taken privately between parties to any kind of contract."

Technical Troubles

I see little evidence of the so-called scarcity of scientists and technologists of which we hear so much. I am an honours graduate in chemical technology. Yet of the six leading companies by whom I was interviewed prior to my finals not one has considered it worth while getting in touch with me.

Now an American firm welcomes me with open arms. Should I be conscience stricken about exporting my qualifications?—A. P., Belfast.

Philanthropic Postman

We postmen who have to collect extra money due on understamped letters are often regarded with suspicion by people who seem to think that we make something out of it.

But we have to pay in the money *before* we collect it, and often lose on the deals. Being human or easy-going, we don't always charge on letters to elderly pensioners—or on such things as understamped greetings cards.—J. WARREN, Kent.

John Bull pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech," and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the John Bull Free Advice Service, whose experts answer questions by post

THE COVER

YES, he can smile, this salesman—even if the customer is tying him in knots. He knows from bitter personal experience just the kind of tie a man can expect a lady to choose for him. And if looks can tell, it doesn't seem as if this miss can imagine her fond father's reaction to the spots before her eyes. In time, of course, she'll learn that it's the male that makes the most fuss over fashion. Meanwhile, to ease her task in future years, cover artist Batchelor suggests: Don't stick your bare neck out at Christmas, Father. Just tell her that you'll settle for socks.

In clear focus — life today with Acrilan in the foreground of the picture. If you're a busy man, get a suit like this, of 50% worsted and Acrilan, and you'll need no gentleman's gentleman to keep you well groomed. When there's at least 50% Acrilan in the blend this obliging acrylic fibre keeps trouser creases immaculate, prohibits bagging at the knees, reduces the need for brushing and pressing, promotes an unruffled appearance however hectic your day. Look out for women's clothes, like this charming dress, also made with 50% Acrilan blended with worsted. They're right in the picture too!

Acrilan is the registered trade mark for the acrylic fibre supplied by **Chemstrand Ltd,** 8 Waterloo Place, London SW1. Dress by **Berkertex Continentals**

Imperial Bounty

Australia's 9/- challenge to Port!

This fine Australian wine by EMU is something really special. It's smooth and sweet—but not too sweet. It's strong—but not too strong. It's delicious! Imperial Bounty is right at any hour — in any company — and with any mood from the tired end-of-dayish to get-up-and-go! Be on the safe side and always have at least two bottles in the house.

9/-

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4/9 half bottle

Imperial Bounty Ruby

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Another Fine Emu Wine

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A real family Main

Saving for the family, too. The Main Century isn't greedy for gas—in fact, it's positively miserly!
It's labour-saving as well; with a big family-sized oven that's never too full; four adjustable boiling burners with fixed stops for simmering; safety sprung taps, each one clearly identified; a quick-heating griller; lift-off plate-rack; and removable, easily replaceable fittings that make it easy and quick to clean.
You can choose your colour now, too. The Century is made in cream, cream and green, cream and blue. See it at your local gas showrooms.

THE MAIN No. 21

CENTURY

GAS COOKER

See the Century at your local gas showrooms

Note the name-made by MAIN

Theres's a big Main gas-cookery book — 750 recipes, over 300 pages. 5/6d. post free from Dept. JB, R & A Main Ltd., 48 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1

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TREASON ROCK

Marion Chebir stood up quickly. "Stop all this politeness," she cried. "We know that if we don't behave we shall be on bread and water"

AWAY to the left was the faint smudge of the French coast and below, shadowed by occasional drifts of cloud, the waters of the Bay of Biscay. In a little while they would hit San Sebastian and the dun-coloured, June-burned ridges of the Pyrenees.

The air inlet above Major John Richmond hissed gently, the draught fretting at the edges of *The Times* which he was reading. The main news story was headlined: *Future Of Cyrenian National Leaders*. And underneath, in smaller type: *Labour Dissatisfaction*.

Richmond smiled at that. Sitting in the Strangers' Gallery yesterday, he had heard the Opposition's dissatisfaction with the statement of the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

. . . The Secretary of State for the Colonies said that the Government had not yet reached a decision on the future of the Cyrenian nationalist leaders, Hadid Chebir and Colonel Mawzi, recently captured during operations against the so-called Cyrenian National Army.

Mr. James Morgan (Llanryll, Lab.) said that the country as a whole was entitled to know the Government's intention. Were these men to be brought to trial, or did the Government intend to send them into exile?

John Richmond lowered the paper for a moment, hearing the strong Welsh voice of Mr. Morgan. He must have known that he was not going to get any satisfaction. The Government had made up its mind all right, but until the thing was done no announcement would be made.

The air hostess came down the gangway, holding a tray of drinks aloft expertly. She glanced at Richmond as she passed, but he was hardly aware of her. He was a long way from the present, years and years back, and at Oxford.

Hadid Chebir. . . . He hadn't known him very well. But

some of his memories stuck clearly, particularly one. Yesterday, while in the House, he had remembered Hadid Chebir under the showers after Rugby, how dark he seemed against the Anglo-Saxon pinkness of the other men. Afterwards, when he went to the War Office to see Banstead, the memory had stayed with him.

Banstead had been pompous to begin with.

"You have, no doubt, divined why I asked you to go along to the House?"

"Yes. When do I leave and where do I go?"

"Tomorrow morning. The San Borodons. Did the Secretary of State go into the Cyrenian political background?"

"Not before I left. Mr. Morgan was giving him hell. But don't worry, I can see you mean to let me have it."

"This whole situation is very delicate and it's necessary to know where you are. . . ."

"I'm going to be stuck on a small island in the Atlantic, by the look of it."

"There are two islands in the group. You will be on Mora, the smaller of the two. The climate is excellent. However, to come back to Cyrenia. In a way, I suppose, it could be called the key to the Middle East strategic problem. . . ."

The staff course lecture had gone on and on.

". . . The Turks and the Arabs make up the larger part of the population. They hate one another, and the small Greek community is persecuted by both. Hadid Chebir's father started the trouble there. He raised a pro-Arab army and there was the uprising and massacre in 1935. Since then the Arab element has opposed any sort of reasonable constitution. They are only interested in independence."

"When was it that the old man Chebir died?"

"In 1937. The name Chebir is a legend there. Since his death young Hadid Chebir and Colonel Mawzi have kept the Cyrenian National Army going and made trouble. We were very lucky to capture them."

And now you have them in the bag, you don't quite know what to do with them?"

"We—or the government, rather—need a breathing space. In the meantime"—Banstead had smiled suddenly and lapsed into a more human manner—"they are going to be your babies, and I'm bloody glad it's you and not me. The three of them are dynamite. And you've got to handle them with kid gloves."

"Three?"

"You're lucky. Madame Chebir has elected to go into voluntary exile with her husband."

"That doesn't surprise me." The English girl who had married Hadid Chebir and identified herself with Cyrenia was well known and through the press had become a sympathetic figure. Now, Richmond thought, he would meet her and would know what she was really like.

"All the arrangements have been made for you," Banstead said. "Pick them up as you go out. There is one thing, however, I should explain. Apart from the general report you'll make to Sir George Hator each week——"

Richmond broke in. "Is he still the San Borodon governor?"

"He'll never be anything else until he retires. As I say, apart from your report to him, you'll also write direct and personally to me when you feel like it. But for heaven's sake don't step on Sir George's toes. . . ."

John had smiled at that. His years in the army had taught him how to avoid stepping on people's toes. Going out, he had picked up his orders in an envelope red-sealed, top-secreted and addressed to Major John Richmond, M.C. And now here he was. . . .

There was an hour's wait at Barajas Airport for Gibraltar passengers. John Richmond went to the transit restaurant and sat on the terrace in the sun watching the airport activity. It was hot and the air was full of the sharp smell of burned-up earth and Spanish tobacco smoke.

A shadow fell across his table and a man's voice said, "Major Richmond?"

He looked up but gave no nod of assent. A dark-haired, good-looking young man of about twenty-eight was standing by the table. He wore a smart, well-cut dark blazer with monogrammed silver buttons, sharply creased flannel trousers and suède shoes.

"It is Major Richmond, isn't it?" he said. "It's on the passenger list. And anyway, you passed me in the corridor outside Banstead's office yesterday. I'm Grayson, A.D.C. to Sir George Hator."

"Oh, yes. . . ." Richmond stirred slightly and with one hand made a faint movement towards the empty chair on the other side of the table. Grayson sat down and his thick lips parted, showing small, very regular teeth. He slipped his hand into his breast pocket and slid his passport across the table. John opened it. It was made out to Neil Grayson.

"Shocking photograph," Grayson said.

Richmond turned over the pages of the passport slowly. Something about his deliberateness and caution irritated Grayson, but he was careful not to show it. He sat there watching Richmond, matching the things he knew about him already—he had spent two hours the previous day briefing himself on Richmond—with his first impression of the man himself.

He noted the comfortable tweed suit, so well cut that it could be worn a little untidily on the big frame; a gold wristlet watch with a worn strap; the lilies of the Magdalen College tie; the lightweight, highly polished brogues; the flash of a crested signet ring as the passport was returned to him; and then the fat, old-fashioned silver cigarette case that followed it and was held open for him.

"It's quite a good photograph. Mine looks like a criminal with a hangover."

It was said easily, wiping away all formality. An easiness of manner, thought Grayson, which he had had to fight for and which came naturally to Richmond.

"We've some time to wait, sir," he said. "Would you like a coffee?"

Richmond nodded. "Thank you."

OVER coffee Grayson said: "I've been on leave, but because of this business I've been called back."

"How are you travelling?"

"I came in on the London plane with you, but I was up forward, so you didn't see me. I go on to Gib. and then tonight I shall be with you on the destroyer Dunoon. Burrows of the Dunoon, you know, is married to Daphne, Sir George Hator's daughter."

"I see," Richmond said. Then, making it quite clear that he had no wish to talk more about official business in an open café, he went on: "Do you know Madrid?"

"Not well."

"Pity we haven't more time here. We could have run in and had a look at the Prado. My mother used to drag me round it when I was a

"Grayson?" echoed Daphne. "I give him ten out of ten for everything, except that he's a bit

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE DITTON

flamboyant at times." Her father said: "He'll lose that with time.. . . or maybe the right wife!"

boy. Later on I found there was no need for dragging."

Without any envy—he'd long learned to keep that out of the way—Grayson thought of his own mother. She'd dragged him around too, not over the length and breadth of Europe pointing out palaces and paintings, but to help carry her shopping from the Co-op; and to deliver her dressmaking bundles to people's houses.

He smiled to himself at the picture. Actually she had done very well from her wise shopping and the extra money she had earned to supplement his father's wages. Her ambition for him had been no less fierce than his own. A State Scholarship to Oxford—not Magdalen, though—and then a brilliant First and eventually the Colonial Office. And now, but only as a further step in the ladder, A.D.C. to Sir George Hator.

Somewhere a loudspeaker spat and crackled and then announced the departure of the Gibraltar plane. They walked out together on to the blinding white concrete apron to the waiting Viscount. . . .

It was a still night. A pale slip of moon hung low over her own reflection on the smooth water. Dropping behind them, almost lost now, were the lights of Gibraltar. The only sounds were routine and domestic, making of H.M.S. Dunoon a little world of contented isolation.

Sitting in his bridge shelter, Lieutenant-Commander Edward Burrows, D.S.O.—Teddy Burrows to his friends—said: "Don't pretend to understand the political ins and outs of this kind of thing. Got a feeling, too, that the big boys aren't all that sure of what they're doing. Mostly they just work to a rule of thumb and look wise."

"This situation is a pretty clear one," said John Richmond. He had changed now into uniform; bush shirt, drill trousers and a lightweight tunic. Because of the meeting ahead he wore his ribbons and a tie.

"Don't try to explain it to me. If a man's a nuisance, get rid of him. Cut off his head or lock him up in the Tower. That's all there is to it." Burrows grunted and gave a horse-like, violent sniff. "Everybody doubled-up to make room for a lot of wogs. Even bringing his damned harem with him. I'd like to hear the lower deck on that one. . . ."

He laughed, the sound breaking through the quiet night. He was a big man and his character and temperament matched his appearance; frank, sprawling, a man who didn't even notice the toes he trod on.

"There's no harem," said John. "Only his wife, and she's English. She didn't have to come with him, you know. So far as she's concerned it's voluntary exile."

"Touching," snorted Burrows. "And what about this Colonel Mawzi? He's a first-class snake by all accounts. I'm sorry for you, having to play jailer."

Later, lying in the cabin which he was sharing with Burrows's Number One, Lieutenant Imray, Richmond found the word "jailer" sticking in his mind. That's what he would be, of course. A high-class jailer.

He got four hours' sleep and was back on the bridge at the first dawn light. Burrows was there with his Number One, and Grayson was wedged in a corner, wrapped in a tweed coat.

There was a lot of bustle and movement of men, orders being shouted and the *click-click* of an Aldis lamp. The sea had a dark, oily shine, with no life in it.

Grayson said: "There she is, over there."

He nodded ahead and John made out a trail of smoke and a dark hull shape, still low down, about a mile ahead of them. They closed rapidly and very soon the two ships were lying less than a hundred yards apart. The other was a steam yacht, flying the Cyrenian flag. Along her port bow ran the name Khamsa.

Burrows came over to them. "Come on, Richmond, we'd better get down and make up the reception committee. Remember, old boy, this is your show and I'm leaving it to you."

The sun came up over the rim of the sea as they reached the quarter deck. The Dunoon's gangway was down and a launch from the yacht was bearing in towards them with a little white bone of broken water at her bows. The shadows of Burrows and his officers stretched long across the deck, and the little wind that had begun to come up with the dawn flirted gently at the wide collars of the ratings.

The reception was very correct, very formal, but no honours were paid except a brief exchange of salutes and introductions. Within ten minutes the Dunoon was heading west for the Straits with the San Borodon Islands forty-eight hours ahead of her. . . .

THERE were four prisoners. In the wardroom they made a silent, patently hostile group at the far end of the long table.

Hadid Chebir sat with his elbows on the table, his face half hidden by the cupped hands around his chin and mouth. He wore an old raincoat with the collar turned up and a blue scarf was wrapped about his throat. Sitting on his left was Colonel Mawzi in khaki drill trousers and tunic, the tunic cut so that it buttoned tight against his throat. On his shoulder tabs were badges of rank unfamiliar to John, a scimitar-shaped sword surmounted by an eagle. The Cyrenian National Army. . . . His hands, one of which held a cigarette in a long and elegant bone holder, were spread across the forage cap on the table in front of him.

To Hadid Chebir's left sat his wife. She wore a loose camel-haired coat over a white dress, but John could see little of her face because her head was bowed. She seemed to be examining an ink spot on the brown tablecloth, appearing not to listen or even to be aware of anybody else. Behind them, his back resting against the sideboard, stood the servant they had brought aboard, a small, elderly man with a grey growth of stubble light against his brown skin.

Feeling the stiffness in him induced by their hostility, yet understanding it and, therefore, anxious to keep all parade-ground manner from his voice, Richmond said: "Lieutenant-Commander Burrows and I will do all we can to make you comfortable while you're aboard. But you will appreciate that there is not much room on a destroyer, so things may be a little cramped."

Colonel Mawzi looked up. He held the cigarette and its holder in front of him vertically like an exclamation mark and said: "Why do you assume that we understand English?"

"Your leader, Hadid Chebir, was at Oxford for four years. Madame Chebir, I understand, is an Englishwoman——"

"Was." The voice came muffled from Madame Chebir and her head did not stir.

"And you, Colonel, spent three years in the

Continued on page 32

Formula for a successful party: a Hep Cat with ginger hair and a Humpty Dumpty that winks

Spellbound by kids' stuff

by ROY HILL

Richard Barrs usually begins his show with a display of magic. This rabbit once failed to appear. The assistant had fallen asleep

RICHARD BARRS, a tall, debonair puppeteer and conjurer, went to give a puppet show at a juvenile theatrical school in London where the pupils were having a party.

The principal of the school had warned him that the children, mostly girls of six and seven, were knowledgeable and hard to please. He found them dancing rock 'n' roll to gramophone music.

"Kids' stuff," one of them said as Barrs set up his wood and aluminium puppet booth, which he carries collapsed in a parcel the size of a golf bag. But from the moment when the first of his puppets appeared on the miniature stage the children were enthralled.

Afterwards a girl who had appeared in a film with Anna Neagle told Barrs: "We all enjoyed your show—you really are very good, you know." Gravely he thanked her for the compliment.

When Barrs performed at the Hampstead home of the Countess of Euston, Prince Charles, wearing a Stetson which his father had brought back from Canada, helped with conjuring tricks. Later the Queen talked with Barrs while Prince Charles examined the puppets. "Put them down, Charles," the Queen kept saying, but the prince repeatedly picked them up. "I have yet to meet a child," says Barrs, "who isn't fascinated by a puppet."

A softly spoken professional of thirty-eight, Barrs has concentrated on entertaining children since 1945. In 1949 he adopted a second name, Norman Richards, for business purposes and, with Miss Daphne Stopps, a bouncy, cheerful friend he knew as a child, started in Kensington the Children's Party Agency.

The partners approached four hundred entertainers and approved two hundred, including the then little-known David Nixon, as suitable for children. Their agency remains the only one in London which books conjurers, clowns, story tellers, paper-tearing acts, cartoon films and Punch and Judy shows for children's parties exclusively. "Many top-line performers," says Barrs, "have little idea how to entertain youngsters."

He and Miss Stopps appear at about half of approximately seven hundred parties a year where the agency is asked to provide entertainment. "It is possible to interest children of five to nine in Punch and Judy, cartoon films and conjuring," says Barrs, "but for tots of between three and five only puppets will do. Animated glove puppets suit children of all ages."

Recently the daughter of a client sent Barrs a white lace petticoat, addressed to a puppet called Tulip Pig. With it was a note to the pig which said: "Here is a petticoat I have made for you because I am so tired of your saying what a horrible petticoat you have."

Barrs made a note to change this particular puppet's party line: "Look at my horrid petticoat, it's time you bought me a new one."

He doesn't often have to vary his basic patter. "Children are quick to remember and scoff at old conjuring tricks," he says, "but they enjoy knowing in advance what will happen to the puppets."

Early in a show Barrs encourages the children to interrupt and talk back at the puppets. Well-meaning parents sometimes interfere by telling the children to be quiet; or they serve ice-cream during the performance, breaking the spell of concentration. "Occasionally," says Barrs, "the children keep tight control until an adult in the audience laughs. Then they nearly have hysterics."

Barrs starts a puppet show with conjuring tricks which are quickly interrupted by a rabbit worked by Miss Stopps from behind the booth. When the children are absorbed Barrs slips away to help to work the puppets. "There's always a nightmare moment," he says, "when I expect to hear a child call out, 'Where's that man gone?'"

On one occasion the rabbit failed to appear on cue. Barrs stalled, then asked: "Can you hear a rabbit snoring?" He scratched the front of the booth hoping, but in vain, that Miss Stopps would oblige with a snore. "I think that what I should do," he said to the children, "is to creep round here and wake up the rabbit."

Behind the booth he found Miss Stopps, exhausted by a hectic series of shows, fast asleep. As she awoke she knocked against a wooden support and the booth rocked. "Humpty Dumpty has fallen off the wall again," Barrs said blandly.

In December Barrs and Miss Stopps give as many as four shows a day. They are booked up months ahead. Another difficult time for bookings is from June to September, when city entertainers migrate to coastal resorts. When a conjurer with thirty bookings in London had a heart attack last August, Barrs spent ten days finding substitutes to take over his engagements. Barrs received the usual agent's commission of ten per cent.

Fees vary from six guineas upwards according to the season, the length of show—Barrs recommends not more than forty minutes for children of seven and under—and the type of show. The hire of a full-length cartoon film in colour at Christmas costs about £25. Out-of-town charges for live entertainment can also be high.

Last Christmas a woman telephoned from Gloucester offering to pay a guinea for a conjurer. When Barrs suggested that the fee was rather low she raised her offer to thirty shillings. Barrs explained gently that the cost of the show, journey from London, lodgings and compensation for lost time would be nearer twenty guineas. "The line went dead," he says. "I rather think that she fainted."

Much of the agency's business comes through personal recommendation. Often clients demand one entertainer and, if he is not available, will alter the date of their party rather than book a man they do not know.

Last Christmas, when Barrs gave a puppet show at the Regent's Park home of Mrs. John Profumo—Valerie Hobson, the actress—a guest named Victoria Thorneycroft clapped excitedly. Barrs was not entirely surprised when in June he was asked to Victoria's sixth birthday party in her father's rooms at 11 Downing Street.

When Sir Winston Churchill was Prime Minister, Barrs entertained the Churchill family at Chequers on Boxing Day. Mrs. Churchill guided her husband to a wing chair, but he waved it aside and sat with the children. Stepping forward to assist with the conjuring, Randolph Churchill whispered: "You won't make a fool of me, will you?"

Barrs has a rule never to "take the mickey" out of volunteer assistants; and he never books shows which include live animals—"an element of cruelty is always involved."

If he is asked to produce a rabbit from a hat he obliges, but the rabbit is a dummy fitted with a powerful spring. It looks more alive than the genuine animal.

Although he sometimes wears a coloured waistcoat which changes colour seven times—exactly how is a family secret—Barrs always dresses in a lounge suit for afternoon shows, and prefers other entertainers he books to do the

Children of all ages are quickly enthralled by glove puppets. Barrs's pet hates include parents who serve ices and break his spell

same. "Many clients," he said, "ask the entertainer to mix socially with their guests. Then fancy dress is out of place."

Recently a hostess told him that a show was excellent but added that she wished the woman entertainer wouldn't dress in black satin and wear diamante jewellery. Barrs noted her aversion.

Another woman was offended to find that the red paper with white stars on the back of Barrs's puppet booth matched the curtains in her lounge. She nearly cancelled the show, but couldn't face telling the children.

The son of a Lancashire father and a Yorkshire mother, Barrs was twelve when he made his début as a conjurer at the now defunct Maskelyne's Theatre in London. He spent the war in the Royal Army Medical Corps, mainly in troopships.

On a voyage from Cape Town to Suez he conjured for a batch of West African troops on a hospital deck. The native troops watched goggle-eyed as he snatched cards from the air.

Later, on duty as an orderly, Barrs took the pulse of an African with a slight temperature. The man shrieked. Barrs was mystified until a coloured sergeant explained: "He thinks you are a ju-ju man—bad magic. Now that you have touched his wrist he is going to die."

"Nonsense," Barrs said, "this man isn't seriously ill. Tell him that he'll be on his feet tomorrow." Two days later the man was dead—officially with pneumonia. This had a powerful effect on Barrs, who realized fully for the first time the power of suggestion over immature minds.

Recently an entertainer he booked to appear at a school in the East End ended his Punch and Judy show traditionally with a hanging. Later, in the school cloakroom, two boys tied a scarf round a girl's neck and tried to hang her from a coat hook.

Now Barrs insists that Punch and Judy shows must end happily. He won't allow the witch in Hansel and Gretel to be roasted in the oven—she must be chased or frightened off the premises—and he reserves his most fearsome puppet, a pirate, for older children.

AFTER the war Barrs guessed correctly that TV would encourage children's entertaining while engagements at Masonic dinners and ladies' nights would decline. He experimented with simple glove puppets, then advertised to find a maker of animated puppets. Desmond MacNamara, an authority on papier mâché who was formerly property maker at the Gate and Abbey theatres in Dublin, responded.

First he made a large green frog which Barrs tried out at a free show for children from neighbouring streets. The puppet was a big success, and now Barrs has seventy puppets, which cost up to £30 each. They include a Hep Cat with ginger hair and long eyelashes; "The Thing," turnip faced with goggle eyes and erect black hair; a chimpanzee which can be made to eat carrots; a French-speaking ostrich and a Humpty Dumpty that winks.

They interest adults as much as they entertain the children. After a show at the house of Carol Reed, the film director, Reed kept Barrs talking for an hour discussing the puppets and how to obtain the most dramatic effects with them.

It is a rule of the agency never to let a party down. Once Barrs travelled through a blizzard to a house in Sussex, arrived three hours late, stopped the children on their way to bed, gave a shortened show, then returned to London, which he reached at 3 a.m.

His friend, Xavier, another entertainer, paid a boatman to row him with his props from Gravesend to Tilbury, where he later gave a show at a school. The fog was so thick that all other traffic on the Thames was at a standstill.

Another entertainer booked through the agency arrived at a "children's party" in Hampshire to find four chairs set out in a cottage garden.

He gave his Punch and Judy show to an audience consisting of a woman, her two cats and a parrot in a cage.

"The fee," says Barrs, "was fifteen guineas. Paid on the dot."

THE END

by Colonel Maurice Buckmaster

Dynamite for lunch shatters the Nazis

In their food baskets, Lille's railwaymen carried the tools of destruction. Soon their mighty works lay in smoking ruins

By the beginning of 1943 our organization had settled in a pattern which it kept for the rest of the war. We of the French section of Special Operations Executive had our headquarters in Baker Street, London, where operations were planned, intelligence was collated and filed, and new reports from agents in the field were received. We held our briefing sessions in Orchard Court, not far away, where men who were to be dropped into France were given the latest details about conditions generally, and as they affected their own particular districts.

It might be that a certain operator was suspected of working with the Germans. We would warn the outgoing agent and tell him under what circumstances he should take action to silence the man. This flat in Orchard Court was the one which contained the famous black-tiled bathroom in which returning agents often had their first taste of luxury after months of danger.

Sometimes in the Orchard Court flat Peter Churchill might be found, fully clothed in the dry tub, his feet resting on the taps, doing the crossword in *The Times*.

The flat was presided over by Park, a former messenger at the Paris branch of the Westminster Bank. He had a prodigious memory, knew every agent by his training pseudonym and made each one personally welcome.

His tact and popularity averted many awkward and embarrassing meetings between men who were not supposed to know each other's appearance.

We wanted to discourage our men from meeting in the field, and the best way to do it was to see that they did not meet in England more than we could help.

One thing was absolutely against orders—to tell anybody where one was going. There was a particular danger of this when two agents met in the flat and knew that they were due to be sent off at the same time.

So Park became adept at moving people from briefing room to briefing room (and into the bathroom) with the agility of the characters in a French farce.

Immense pains were taken to ensure that an agent fitted the part he was playing, not only in his appearance but also with his accent. It is easy to speak perfect French and yet still retain traces of a foreign inflexion. We would account for any deviation by including in an agent's cover story a Canadian background, Belgian education or whatever was most appropriate.

Once he was absolutely clear on the purpose and the background of his mission, and until he boarded the plane, each agent was escorted by an officer who ensured that no English cigarettes or money were slipped into a pocket at the last moment.

I always saw each agent personally before he left and tried to give him some memento—a pair of cuff links or a cigarette case—to remind him in France that we were thinking of him.

I tried, as often as I could, to accompany the men to the aerodrome, for this moment before take-off was most upsetting to the nerves.

When an agent had finally gone, we could only wait to hear from the R.A.F. that they had dropped him, and eventually from the man himself.

One of our biggest headaches from the start was to get supplies into northern France—Lille in particular. The Germans had so protected the area with anti-aircraft guns that parachute drops were impossible. This was especially annoying since Lille was one of the first Resistance areas; it claims the proud title of "Cradle of the Resistance." Even after Dunkirk, Lille never really acknowledged the armistice.

But the people had to live, and the only way was in the factories. The Lillois simply had to work for the Boches—unless the factories could be wrecked. That was the objective of the Resistance.

Sylvestre, the Frenchman on the spot who had recruited several tough groups, was clamouring for help. They had already killed many Boches; but they needed co-ordination and arms.

We sent them Michel Trotobas. He had lived in northern France before the war and had been stationed in Lille before the German breakthrough. He was the ideal man.

He connected up with Sylvestre and they at once began to co-ordinate the Lille *réseaux*—resistance units — with the rest of our organization.

The first step was wireless contact with London. So strict were the controls and so rigid was the curfew in the Lille area that I thought it would be suicidal to send a wireless

"How will you cross the frontier?" said the man. Henry fingered his gun. "I don't know, and if I did I wouldn't tell you," he said

ILLUSTRATION BY ZELINSKI

Derailing trains—like this one in the Alps—was a skill taught to all agents. Wrecking troop trains on embankments made certain of casualties

Agents' supplies were usually dropped by parachute at night. Later in the war, Flying Fortresses made brazen daylight drops of equipment

operator there. I had discussed this with Michel and he promised to try to find a way out. With Sylvestre he travelled to St. Quentin and contacted Yolande, an S.O.E. girl of great initiative who was operating there.

"I've got a French operator, a first-rate chap called Max Leroux," she said. "He's been cleared with London and he's ready to go to work as soon as you need him."

Leroux was a burly and opinionated man whom Michel found very likeable. "I won't work for De Gaulle," was his first remark. "Are you anything to do with him?"

"I am a British officer," Michel said.

"I'll do as you say," Max snarled as if he had refused. "Let's have something to drink."

Michel and Sylvestre sent their first message through Max the next evening, asking for arms but making no suggestions as to how to get them across. The two men had to get back to Lille, which was ringed with guards and continuously subject to all kinds of checks and hazards.

SYLVESTRE procured a pass for Michel stamped with the German eagle and proclaiming him to be a special consultant to a glass works. They had no trouble getting back, but Michel realized what a tremendous task it would be to get arms through the controls.

Michel and Sylvestre travelled the last lap on local buses.

"There seems to be a hell of a lot of traffic on this road," Michel observed.

"It's the *routiers*—the lorry drivers," Sylvestre said. "They still use the road to bring supplies to and from the factories."

Michel said: "My friend, I have had an idea." Back in Lille he explained: "We'll use road transport. London can arrange for supplies to be picked up in Paris, and the *routiers* can bring them in."

In London I thought over the plan. "We can make the first drop near Meaux," I said.

"Do you think it will work?" asked Vera Atkins, my personal assistant.

"It has to. The Air Ministry want the locomotive shops at Fives-Lille to go up. If we can't do it, they will. There are houses all round there—it'll mean hundreds of civilian casualties."

"Fives-Lille! That's a tremendous job."

"That's why we've got to get busy. Now then, Armand, our man at Meaux, can receive the arms on Monday night. I want all the stuff cleared out of the Meaux area by the next morning. Michel himself will do the first run in, with their best long-distance man, on Tuesday morning; and I want a report from Max the following morning after that."

Vera looked up. "They'll need a lot more than one lorry load. How long have we got?"

"A month," I said. . . .

Three long flashes . . . two short ones . . . three long ones. The throb of the plane grew closer. On the ground Armand and the reception team waited armed with sten guns.

"Is that C for Charlie, is that C for Charlie?" came the voice of the aircraft's captain over the two-way radio.

"This is C for Charlie," Armand replied. "What have you got for us?"

"Eight sacks of toys," was the reply. "No bods."

"Bods" was the R.A.F. term for agents.

Four containers dropped from the plane, then four more heavy packages, lagged with rubber to absorb the shock of landing.

"Out lights," snapped Armand. Already men were racing in groups across the field to collect the packages. Within four minutes each group leader had reported that one or other of his pairs of men had collected a package and that all were regrouped.

The sten-gunners numbered off; the radio man reported present. Then, a sten-gunner leading, the team made off towards a lorry camouflaged in a side road.

On towards Paris, laden with contraband arms, drove the truck with the words "Audubon-Charbons, Melun" written on its dirty flapboard. Short of the village of Moret-sur-Loing the driver swung it off the road through a small yard and into a barn, where sacks of slate and coal were emptied over the bundles of arms.

By five the driver was on the move again, along the road to Paris. In a small private garage in Montmartre, Michel and Jules, a *routier* well known to the Germans on the route to Lille, were waiting.

At seven the lorry arrived and the men transferred the arms to another lorry, labelled Hubert et Fils, Lille. A further slogan stamped over it read: "Au service de l'Allemagne." Eight large drums of gas-oil were piled on top of the load.

The two lorries left the garage. One turned south to Melun. Michel and Jules, their job just beginning, turned north towards the N17 and Lille.

The lorry hummed along easily. Jules sat confidently at the wheel, smoking a cigarette. "We're coming up to the control proper," he warned Michel.

They had no trouble inside the command post, but when they came out again, a knot of German soldiers were clustered around their lorry. Michel and Jules stopped. *They've found the stuff,* Michel thought. "What shall we do," he said.

"Keep going." Jules walked boldly up to the lorry. "*Bon jour, mes braves,*" he said in a comradely, yet somehow contemptuous, tone. "Yes, I've got something for you." He produced a battered set of photographs. The Germans smiled and gathered round. "Only twenty-five francs each," Jules said, "and they're magnificent." He kissed his fingers and rolled his eyes suggestively.

Michel realized what was going on. The Germans had not been searching the lorry at all. They were waiting for Jules. He was bringing them their quota of pornographic pictures. "I do it every trip," Jules said when they had safely drawn away from the control. "It stops them asking awkward questions."

By nightfall they had safely parked the lorry in a lock-up garage and the arms had been unloaded and stored away in the attic of Sylvestre's house.

That night they sent a telegram to Max in Paris: MOTHER AND CHILD BOTH WELL, SEND MORE TOYS. Max transmitted the message to us. Lille could be armed. . . .

It became obvious that we would have to postpone the blowing up of the sheds at Fives-Lille. Although things were going ahead well, there simply would not be enough explosives and arms there in time for the men to know how to use them. I rang a wing commander at Bomber Command and told him.

"The old man won't like it," he said.

"I don't like it," I said. "But that's the way it's got to be."

By now—it was January, 1943—all over France our chaps were organizing sabotage in a way that at one time seemed impossible. Yet

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George Starr, known in France as Hilaire, was one of the best agents we had, says Maurice Buckmaster

Arthur Park's memory and tact averted many awkward meetings at the flat in Orchard Court

In the shop was the best reason for smoking that Ambrose had ever seen. He said to her: "That car outside. Does it—er—belong to somebody here?"

What a pompous young policeman! Nobody could stop his reign of terror—not even glamorous Giannina

Ambrose and the Laws of Love

by ***ROBERT HOLMES***

ILLUSTRATED BY EDWIN PHILLIPS

IN the small town of Bennington, news travelled quickly. It was shortly after noon when Police-Sergeant Crabbe was seen entering the Brown Bull; within minutes a message had filtered out of the saloon bar: "That perishin' Bates is on High Street again. . . ."

The message had a curious effect. Job Williams, of Williams Groceries, and Fredk. Smallgrove, draper, immediately emerged from their shops and drove their cars to the British Legion car park. Bates was hot on obstruction.

Herbert Dalrymple took a bucket of water and a stiff brush and rigorously scrubbed the pavement outside his fishmongery. Bates was hot on noxious effluents fouling the footway.

Sidney Jenkins cleaned off the suet that had stuck mysteriously to the underside of his butcher's scales. Bates had been known to do the work of the weights and measures people.

Bill Hodges left his pile of midday editions and made a hurried telephone call. Then he quietly dropped a dozen scraps of paper down the nearest drain. Bates was a terror on the subject of street betting.

"The week before Christmas, the season of goodwill," Bill said bitterly, "and they have to put Bates on the 'Igh Street. There ought to be a law against it. . . ."

All along the cobbled High Street precautions were being taken. Only Vera Pettigrew (baby linen) and the newcomers at the tobacco and confectionery shop remained untroubled.

Miss Pettigrew had nothing on her conscience. No policeman, not even one who made a hobby of obscure by-laws, could find much wrong with baby linen. True, Bates had caught her once for beating her door-mat in the street after 8 a.m. but, after that unwitting offence, she had never erred from the paths of rectitude.

As for the newcomers, they had been trading in Bennington only a week; and they remained untroubled because they were Italians and nobody had told them that Constable Ambrose Antonio Bates was possibly the most zealous police officer in the whole of England.

Ambrose appeared at the top of the High Street promptly at two o'clock and began his leisurely, eagle-eyed patrol. He was tall and thin and surprisingly young. A mesh of freckles gave his face a deceptively harmless look and, under his helmet, his hair resembled a sand-ouzel's nest.

With his chin jutting out into the chill December wind, Ambrose advanced down the street like a slow-marching guardsman. Already his attention was riveted on the car outside Dawson's — a big, ostentatious, two-coloured vehicle that was standing there in flagrant defiance of the no-parking signs.

He considered the car carefully and then felt for his pencil. He was inspecting the licence when Bill Hodges, eyes bright with interest, came up to him.

"Going to blister 'em, guv?" he asked.

Ambrose stared at the newspaper seller coldly. "Blister who?" he said. "Whom?"

It was a grammatical nicety lost on Hodges. "The Eyeties," he said, pointing to Dawson's shop. "People called Venturini—only took over this week."

"I didn't know Dawson had gone," said Ambrose Bates, middle name Antonio. "Italians are they?"

"Real spaghetti," Hodges assured him. Then, thinking that the constable's eye was distinctly unfriendly, he decided it was time to go.

Ambrose stared after him for a moment and then went into the shop. He found himself facing a counter displaying cigarettes and tobacco—and behind it stood the most wonderful reason for smoking that Ambrose had ever seen. She was smiling. Ambrose returned the smile dazedly before he remembered that he was a policeman.

"That car outside," he said cautiously, "does it—er—belong to someone here?"

"Oh, yes," the girl said. "It is Angelo's. I shall get him."

She made Ambrose a present of another warm smile and walked to a door at the back of the shop. Ambrose watched appreciatively. She disappeared through the door and he heard a brief, muffled conversation. Then the girl came back into the shop, followed by a plump but dapper man. He beamed at Ambrose.

"The merry Christmas," he said, rubbing dust from his hands. "So much work to do, so much boxes of chocolate novelties to store behind—but worth it, no?"

Ambrose said sternly: "Mr. Venturini, I understand that is your car outside."

"Car?" Mr. Venturini looked puzzled. He went to the door and peered out. He brightened. "Ah, my *car*!" he said rapturously. "Yes, that is mine."

Ambrose had followed these antics with a wooden face. "Parking is forbidden in the High Street," he said. "You must move it."

"Impossible," said Mr. Venturini. "I have the novelties to bring, boxes to carry—"

"I'm sorry. You cannot leave your car there."

"But in ten minutes I drive away with—"

"Drive away now."

"Now? So!" Mr. Venturini said. He ran a fingernail along his neat, narrow moustache and stared at Ambrose with growing passion. "So all right," he said finally. "I drive." Turning to the girl, he added in rapid Italian: "I will be gone a few minutes, Giannina. I will bring the car back when this horse-faced official has departed."

"He is not horse-faced," said Giannina. "He is beautiful. And do not bring the car back. Take it to the park."

"Bah!" said Mr. Venturini, in Italian. He brushed angrily past Ambrose and went out to his car. He got in and pulled down the window. "He is the *ugly* end of a horse," Mr. Venturini called. "And I shall bring the car back in five minutes." Then, with a crash of gears, he shot away.

"Angelo has been working so hard," Giannina said apologetically. "He is tired."

Ambrose acknowledged the remark with a half nod. Not trusting himself to speak, he left the shop. The girl was nice—but her husband! A sly, underhanded rogue, Ambrose thought, trying to get away with a trick like that.

HE turned into the arcade a few yards from the Venturini shop. His boots clicked hard on the green tiles. What angered Ambrose more than anything was the thought that, if he had not learned Italian virtually at his mother's knee, the sly Angelo's plan might well have succeeded. Instead of being here in the arcade, waiting for Angelo's return, he might have been at the other end of the High Street.

That was what happened when you tried to do someone a favour. Give an inch and they took a yard. He had been particularly lenient with Venturini, allowing him a second chance, and the Italian had repaid his kindness with insults and deceit.

Ambrose squared his shoulders and turned about. He walked back to the beginning of the arcade and was in time to see Venturini entering his shop. The car was outside. A mirthless grin crossed Ambrose's freckled face. He took out his pencil and notebook and went back to the shop.

As he entered, Angelo Venturini looked up and gave a loud cry, half of anger and half of triumph. "Giannina, didn't I say he was a horse? See, he gallops round his beat."

"Clever Angelo," the girl said. "Now you will get what you deserve."

By not so much as the twitch of an eyelash did Ambrose show that he understood what had been said. But he was in a mood to allow no quarter. He examined Angelo's driving licence

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Aurora!

Don't forget the

KIA-ORA

KIA-ORA SUNCRUSH

Made from the whole fruit

ORANGE · LEMON · GRAPEFRUIT · 3/3 per bottle

Bassey won the world featherweight title by beating the Algerian Cherif Hamia (right) in Paris. In training, his gentle treatment of sparring partners surprised French boxing critics

Kneel, pray—and punch

by NORMAN PHILLIPS

World champion Hogan Bassey says a prayer for his opponents, then tries hard not to hurt them

ON the Monday evening of June 24, while 18,000 Frenchmen filled the Palais des Sports in Paris, a young Nigerian clerk kneeled in a deserted dressing-room and prayed for himself and an Algerian shepherd boy.

When his prayers were finished Hogan Bassey marched to the ring where, in the space of forty minutes, he reduced the Algerian—his opponent, Cherif Hamia—to a defenceless state, earned £7,500 and the title of world's champion featherweight boxer.

A featherweight must weigh no more than nine stone. Bassey, who is only five feet three inches tall, manages to keep to this weight and, at the same time, possess a heavily muscled stockiness. According to a panel of French doctors who examine athletes, he is the finest example of physical fitness they have seen.

Bassey's conduct, mild-mannered and extremely modest, masks the rugged durability of his physique. His youthful face is usually serious, often frowning, and he is as much at home inside a church as he is in the ring.

A devout and regular churchgoer, Bassey is almost a reluctant world champion. As a boy in Nigeria he had not the slightest interest in boxing and had to be taunted into entering a ring for the first time. His mother continues to press her son to give up fighting, and only recently has he overcome his own hesitation to damage his opponents.

Before a fight Bassey always prays that neither he nor his adversary will be hurt. This has not prevented him from breaking the noses of several antagonists in becoming the first Nigerian—and currently the only British subject—to hold a world boxing title.

"Everyone in our country," Bassey explained recently in the parlour of his modest Liverpool home, "is trying to put Nigeria on the map. And that's what I'm trying my best to do."

Bassey owns his own house in the Princes Park district where many of his African and West Indian friends live. At least once a day, the champion, who has no car, walks the two miles to the town, and back.

Until he won the world title Bassey was employed as an apprentice fitter in the English Electric Company's Liverpool garage. He was advised to give up his job for fear of damaging his hands. "They are the tools of my trade," he says.

While training, Bassey rises at 5.30 a.m. for roadwork, sleeps several hours during the day and then goes to St. Helens at 7 p.m. to work out in the gymnasium run by his trainer, Charlie Fox. He returns about nine thirty to a steak dinner prepared by his wife, a Liverpool girl, Maria Williams, whom he married in 1955 after winning the British Empire title.

Before and during a fight, Bassey is calm and unruffled. In Paris during the second round Hamia sent him sprawling with a short right to the chin. The French crowd rose cheering; the small British contingent was thunderstruck.

George Biddles, Bassey's manager, says: "My heart began to thump with excitement and Charlie Fox was pounding the floor of the ring. Hogan was self-possessed, took a count of eight and went on with the fight."

"I did it again," were Bassey's first words to Mrs. Bessie Braddock after the match. "I let my guard down in that second round." He made no reference to the subsequent destruction he had wrought on his opponent.

The diminutive Bassey, who is dwarfed by the massive Mrs. Braddock, says: "She has been like a mother to me." In return, he is a convinced political supporter of his patroness and

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Bessie Braddock, M.P., and her niece visit the Basseys' home. Mrs. Braddock is president of the Professional Boxers' Association, and often sees Bassey fight

DESPERATE JOURNEY

by ***DUDLEY BARKER***

ILLUSTRATED BY BATCHELOR

Polly's anger had wrecked their Christmas. But did that matter now—with a child's life at stake?

IN the control tower at Fernbush—not a very large airport serving a not very populous district of northern England—Bill Marchant was trying to explain to his angry young wife Polly why he had to do duty on Christmas Eve.

"We drew for it. I was unlucky, that's all. Some people have to work over Christmas, darling—postmen, telephone operators, engine drivers. . . ."

He broke off, aware that the list was not doing him much good. Her face was pouting. Polly did not in any case think much of the job of air traffic controller at a civil airport; dashing pilot would have been more in her line.

"Someone has to be on duty," Bill lamely concluded.

"But why does it always have to be you at holiday times?"

"We drew lots," was all he could repeat. "It's the fairest way. And I've only got the third watch to do, darling, then Perkins takes over."

"What time do you think you will get to the party?"

The Christmas party for the airport staff. There would she be, his pretty young Polly, in

Bill turned and staggered back down the road towards the car lights, waving his arms. "Important drugs . . . in my pocket," he gasped

the new dress she had made for herself—the only wife unescorted.

"I'm sorry, darling," he said. "I'll be there as soon as I can, probably about ten."

"But surely nothing is flying tonight."

"Nothing at the moment, but you never know. I'm on duty and I must stay here."

"Oh, go back to your crossword puzzle," she cried angrily. "I'm going home to change."

When she had gone, Bill looked out of the wide windows at the runway shining a little, even in the darkness, from the last fall of snow. There was a low light in the met. office next door where Green, the duty officer, was reading. Bill called to him: "What's the met. doing?"

"Not much change. There's a lot of snow about in patches. Wouldn't surprise me if it closed right down before midnight."

Bill nodded gloomily to himself. Polly was right. Here he was, still young, stuck in a silly routine job that kept him on duty on such a Christmas Eve as this, sitting by a silent phone. Nothing was flying.

But something *was* flying. The buzz of the direct line from London startled him. "Fernbush duty controller," he said.

"Hallo. Hang on a minute." Pause. Then another voice: "Hallo Fernbush. We have an urgent flight for you." The voice went on with the details. It seemed an absurdly small aircraft for such a night.

"Weather's not too good up here," Bill interjected, "and it looks like closing. I doubt if it's wise for him to take off."

"We know about the weather," said the voice irritably. "We too have met. reports. And he has already taken off. E.T.A. twenty-one-ten hours." Then the London voice, becoming more human, added: "It's an emergency, old man. Do you know a place called Wilverton?"

"Of course. It's a small town just the other side of the moor, about twelve miles from here."

"Seems there's a child in the cottage hospital there that's likely to die, unless they can get a new, experimental drug to him quickly. The only supplies were in a lab near London, so the kid's father has chartered a plane."

"I hope the pilot knows what he's doing," said Bill.

"He's a good type, ex-R.A.F. Chap named Elms. He volunteered because he comes from your part of the world and wants to spend Christmas with his Mum and Dad."

Well, good luck to him, thought Bill.

"Will you phone the hospital," asked London, "and tell them the stuff is on the way? Dr. Redinge is the name. He'll have to arrange for the drug to be picked up from you."

"Will do."

"Thanks, old man. Happy Christmas."

Bill glanced at the clocks, then strolled into the met. office. Green, with his feet on the desk, looked up from his thriller.

"There's a Tiger Moth on its way up from London," said Bill. "What are the prospects?"

"Not as good as all that." Green turned to the charts on the big desk. "Why should they send a crate like that on a night like this? Better tell him to put back, Bill."

"It's an emergency. He's bringing some new drug to a child who's likely to die otherwise in Wilverton hospital."

Green whistled gently in his teeth. "Well, that's different. Better get to work."

Bill nodded and went back to his desk. He phoned Dr. Redinge at Wilverton Hospital.

"Controller, Fernbush Airport here. I've just had a message from London. An aircraft has left with the drug you need. It's due here just after nine o'clock."

"None too soon," muttered the doctor, "I'll send a car over to pick it up. The driver will be with you at eight thirty."

"Thanks, Doctor," Bill said. He added: "The weather's not too good. I hope the aircraft will be able to get in here."

"You can pray so," said the doctor curtly.

Bill hung up. Now he had to wait. He wandered to the window and saw, to his dismay, a flurry of snow sweep across the airfield. But then it was clear again. He went back to his desk, lit a cigarette, entered up his log.

Green came through. "This man's got an hour to go, hasn't he?"

"Perhaps a little more."

"Well, it may hold off that long. There's a lot of snow coming across from the north-east."

Bill fidgeted uneasily with his pencil, and waited. Just about now Polly would be sitting at her dressing-table, with that thin blue wrap round her, making up her face for the party. He looked at the phone, seeking an excuse to ring her up. And then dialled the number.

"Hallo," came Polly's voice.

Bill wondered if she had been crying. It sounded rather like it.

"Darling, it's me."

"Oh."

"Listen, Polly. I forgot. I've got the car here. How will you get to the party?"

"Are you coming to pick me up?"

"You know I can't do that. As a matter of fact, there *is* an aircraft flying. Tell me what time you want to leave and I'll send round a taxi."

"Right away," she replied dully.

"I'll send the taxi. And, darling. . . ."

But she had put down the phone.

Bill phoned for the taxi. Then he waited. Now and then he got a routine report on the aircraft; it was yet some way out of range of the radio-telephone.

At a quarter past eight the outside line buzzed. Bill picked up the phone eagerly, hoping it was Polly. But it was Wilverton Hospital to say that the messenger had just left and should reach him in about half an hour.

He stared out of the window. The snow was coming in more frequent showers. He rang through to the airport ambulance and fire points to warn the duty crews that they might be needed. By half-past eight the snow was thickening. Green came through again and they stood together by the window, staring out.

"Let's be honest. He can't make it," said Green.

"The snow eases up now and then. We might get a stroke of luck."

"And we might not. Can you raise him on the R/T yet?"

Bill went back to his seat and started the motions. After about five minutes he nodded at Green. Contact. "Fernbush Control. Fernbush Control. Are you hearing me?"

He switched over. A tiny crackle of voice came through. "Okay, son."

Staring out of the window while he spoke into the microphone, Bill saw that for the moment the snow had ceased. The night, through which this tiny voice was flying, was now deep black.

"The weather's pretty ropy here," he told the microphone. "I'll read you the latest met." Green pushed a slip of paper in front of him and he read it.

The little voice crackled again. "Sounds as though I'd be better off with a sleigh."

With a grin Bill said: "Listen, Captain Elms, I think you'd better divert. I'll give you a fix and switch you to Crossways. It's clearer there, and they've facilities for getting you down."

"Can the drug be got from Crossways to this hospital?"

"Afraid not," said Bill.

There was a long silence on the air. Then the voice: "I'll get a bit closer before we decide, eh? I've a date in your town for dinner."

Outside the window the snow was fluttering again, though not with such driving force. Green went anxiously back to his chart. Bill set in motion the procedure for receiving the aircraft. Every now and then he talked to Elms. The snow was still spasmodic, now falling, now clear. Peering out, he could see that the coating on the runway was still only shallow; nothing much to worry about there. The scare, of course, was visibility. At a little airport such as Fernbush there was no talk-down gear.

"I'm on duty and I must stay here," said Bill. Polly said angrily: "Oh, go back to your crossword puzzle. I'm going home"

Just before nine o'clock his outside phone buzzed. It was Dr. Redinge. "Any news?"

"The pilot says he'll try to get in," replied Bill, "but it doesn't look very hopeful. Tell me, Doctor, is it vital for you to have this drug?"

"Yes. There is a child's life at stake here."

Bill answered, a little sharply: "And there's a man's life at stake here."

There was a long silence on the phone. Then the doctor said: "Sorry. I'm rather involved with my patient at this end. That happens to a doctor. I know you fellows will do your best, and nobody expects the impossible."

"Thank you, sir. By the way, your messenger hasn't shown up yet."

"He'll be there. This snow must have delayed him over the moor; it'll be pretty thick up there. Will you keep me in touch?"

"Surely."

At five past nine, when the aircraft was about fifteen miles to the south-west, Green came in, face serious. "He'll have to divert, Bill. There's some real stuff coming now."

Bill stared from the window. The snow was driving hard. "Any chance of it letting up?"

"There may be a few breaks, but heaven knows when they'll come."

Bill picked up the microphone. "It's looking

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The fabulous life of FATHER CHRISTMAS

At the hands of Thomas Nast, an American artist, St. Nicholas was turned into a jovial Santa Claus

The Dutch St. Nicholas brings Black Peter, who threatens to send a naughty child away

In Switzerland there is a Christmas parade of weird figures to ward off the spirit of winter

He rides rockets and reindeer; he's kindly, a tyrant—and the richest saint in the business

by REGINALD NETTEL

A BENIGN, rather stout old gentleman with a long white beard, dressed in a hooded red gown, with a sack of toys over his shoulder, is clambering into a chimney-pot on the night of December 24.

Every child in Britain knows who he is. For Santa Claus's British character is now firmly established. He is wholly beneficent, the great rewarder of children. He never administers punishment, even to the extent of withholding a gift. He works by stealth, and is the upholder of the tradition of anonymous giving. He is jovial, fat and frankly commercial, and he keeps up to date. In the last century in the U.S.A. he did not hesitate to use the telephone and nowadays he is quite at home in an aeroplane or spaceship.

But he has never abandoned the chimney. That is the way he always enters a child's bedroom, after the child has gone to sleep, to fill with toys and oranges the expectant empty stocking.

That is Santa Claus as British children know him—a figure of unalloyed kindness.

Not so elsewhere. In Carinthia, Austria, where he is still called by his original name of St. Nicholas, and appears on December 6, he comes to punish as well. In mid-winter can be heard a great night-time clatter of bells and chains as fantastically dressed figures dance three times round the village well, and then rush through the village, clashing their cowbells and knocking on doors for presents of apples, nuts or dried plums to be thrown out to them. On his proper day, St. Nicholas visits every house where there are children. He hears them say their lessons and their prayers and consults an "angel" who is with him and has handy a big book with a record of each child's behaviour.

If the child has been good and knows his lessons he is rewarded with an apple or a St. Nicholas cake, but if he has been really naughty the demons may arrive and threaten to carry him off. Nobody comes to any real harm from them, but they are a frightening medley. Usually one of them carries a whip or a bunch of twigs with which to chasten an unruly child.

The Dutch St. Nicholas is supposed to have come from Spain, bringing with him a character called Black Peter, who carries a switch. In extreme cases, Black Peter might threaten to carry off a naughty child to Spain.

In Holland, St. Nicholas is believed to travel on a white horse, and children fill their wooden shoes with carrots and hay before going to bed on St. Nicholas eve. Next morning the food will have disappeared and the shoes contain presents instead.

In Protestant Germany, where St. Nicholas was dropped at the time of the Reformation, some families have substituted the *Christkind* as the gift bringer. Nowadays, on Christmas Day, German children may still find thin tapes of silver paper on the staircase, apparently dropped by the *Christkind* while finding his way to the Christmas room—a spare room kept closed for a few days before Christmas, and in which the Christmas tree is installed and presents are laid out.

America's Santa Claus is a big business character, who rides on a 25,000-dollar float in the great parade of Hollywood stars and has whole communities living on his fame. His workshop is in the state of New York at a place which is officially named North Pole. On Christmas Eve he rides around in a sleigh drawn by eight reindeer, the names of which are known to all American children: Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donder and Blitzen.

THE modern Santa Claus springs, in fact, from a complicated ancestry. But the man who, more than any other, made him into the genial character that he has become today was an obscure American named Clement Clarke Moore.

It was all done by accident. Moore was a doctor of divinity living in Greenwich Village in New York when, in December, 1822, he wrote a poem for his children, which he recited to them. He called it "The Visit Of St. Nicholas." It was not very good poetry, but it

"Ghosts" with whips and cow-bells roam about the Austrian countryside with St. Nicholas on December 5—Nicholas eve

At Bari, Italy, every May, a statue of St. Nicholas is taken out to sea. This is part of a ceremony which commemorates the arrival of the saint's remains there 870 years ago

was to become one of the great turning points in the story of Santa Claus.

It began conventionally enough:

'Twas the night before Christmas when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there. . . .

But a few lines farther on it was off on a tack of its own. A clatter, and a tiny sleigh drawn by eight reindeer was flying over the rooftops. St. Nicholas came down the chimney with a bound, dressed all in fur. The poem describes his twinkling eyes, rosy cheeks and white beard, and turns him into a merry little character:

He had a broad face and a little round belly
That shook when he laughed like a bowlful of jelly.
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,
And I laughed when I saw him in spite of myself.

Moore was a poet of some merit and, to give him his due, he meant these verses for his children alone and had no intention of publishing them. But a visitor to his house made a copy of the poem and took it away. She was the daughter of a clergyman in Troy, a township in New York State, and a year later she had the poem published in *The Troy Sentinel*. With that love of warm humanity which by-passes literary style, people took "The Visit Of St. Nicholas" straight to their hearts.

For years Moore would not own it, considering it beneath his dignity as a professor of divinity. But in 1844 he put his name to it in a volume of his works.

The poem caught up the echoes from the great sounding-board of European Nicholas-lore, and gave them a new note of universal appeal. But the story had begun many centuries before. The real St. Nicholas was born about A.D. 280 at Patara in Asia Minor. His parents were Christian and had great wealth. Nicholas was to become Bishop of Myra and to suffer imprisonment for his Christian faith. But he was also to become one of the most beloved of all Christian saints.

His parents both died in a plague while he was young and he inherited all their wealth. He decided that, as a Christian, he should give away his riches to the poor—as Christ had commanded. Not wanting to be badgered into giving money to any Tom, Dick or Harry, he went about in disguise, helping those he found to be in need. The most popular story of his generosity concerns the three daughters of a merchant who had lost his money.

Because they would have no dowries, no young men of their social status would marry them, and the daughters were in danger of being left on the shelf. Their father had seriously thought of selling them into slavery. Their plight would have appealed to Nicholas, who came from a rich family with some authority, and whose sympathies throughout his life were with the established order.

WHEN the eldest daughter became of marriageable age, she awoke one morning to find a bag of gold lying in her room. Nobody knew how it got there, but it seemed to have been thrown through the window. It was enough to provide her with a dowry and she was soon happily married. Shortly afterwards the same thing happened to the second daughter, except that this time the bag of gold came to rest in a stocking which she had hung up near the fireplace to dry. Again, nobody knew how it got there, but it might have come down the chimney. Anyway she, too, married.

There remained the third daughter. Her father thought it highly probably that she, too, would be sent a bag of gold by the secret benefactor and each night he hid near her room to find out who the giver might be. At last he saw a man approach with a bag of gold, seized him and found him to be Nicholas. The young man begged that his generosity should be kept secret and the father promised. But later on he broke his word and told the whole story. The legend of Santa Claus, who uses the chimney and leaves his gifts in stockings, was born.

The fame of Nicholas may rightly have been earned by his generosity and by the fact that he was persecuted for his Christian beliefs. After his death his tomb became an object of pilgrimage and he was canonized in the ninth century. He is the patron saint of children and of unmarried girls. He is also the patron saint of thieves, not because he approved of any

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A glowing neon Santa Claus four storeys high symbolizes the Christmas spirit in Miami, U.S.A.

When the bus driver, accompanied by the police, crashed through the door, the colonel was

THE NIGHT THE COLONEL SANK

by ***GEOFFREY HOUSEHOLD***

ILLUSTRATED BY RICHARD O. ROSE

Gad, he'd won the trophy and saved all England's glory. And like a gallant fellow, he'd have to ask the enemy to celebrate

"MAY I say ten pounds?" asked the auctioneer. "Five? Thank you, madam . . . six . . . six-ten . . . seven . . . seven-ten. . . . At seven pounds-ten . . . going at seven pounds-ten . . . an ancient Greek drinking bowl of the best period. Going at . . ."

Sergeant Bill Torbin had wandered into the auction because there was nothing else to do. It was early closing day in Falkstead, and the shops were shut. The only sign of animation was around the open front door of a small, box-like eighteenth-century house, the contents of which were being sold.

"Eight!" said the sergeant nervously.

The auctioneer acknowledged the bid with a smile which managed to express both surprise and appreciation at seeing the United States Air Force uniform in so rural a setting. He might have been welcoming Bill to the church hall.

"May I say eight-ten?" he went on.

A military-looking man, overwhelming in size and manner, nodded sharply.

Bill could hardly hope that the bowl was genuine. He liked it for itself. He ran the bowl up to ten pounds, then, when the auctioneer's hammer was already in the air, he heard someone say:

"Guineas!"

There was a snap of triumph in the word, a

...thing Bill's face with gin and tonic. "Now which of you gentlemen . . ." a policeman began

suggestion that the whole sale had now come to a full stop. It was the military man again. To Sergeant Torbin he was the most terrifying type of native—a bulky chunk of brown tweed suit, with a red face and ginger moustache on top of it.

"It's against you, sir," the auctioneer told Sergeant Torbin hopefully.

Bill knew that much already. But the mysterious word *guineas* sounded as if it had raised the ante to the moon. He panicked. He decided that he had no business in auctions. After all, he had only been in England a week and had come to Falkstead on his first free afternoon because it looked such a quiet little heaven from the train.

"Going at ten guineas. . . . At ten guineas, then. . . . Sold at ten guineas!"

Disappointed, Bill Torbin walked out. He was sitting on the low wall which separated the garden of the house from the road, waiting for the six thirty train back to his bleak East Anglian airfield, when the tweed suit rolled down the garden path with the drinking bowl under its arm.

"Nice work, Colonel," Bill said, for he bore the old boy no ill-will.

"Oh, it's you, is it? I say, you didn't want it, did you?"

The sergeant thought that was the silliest question he had ever heard. He realized, however, that it was meant as a kind of apology and asked pleasantly if the bowl were genuine.

"Good Lord, yes," said the colonel. "An Athenian cylix. The old vicar had it vetted. His father picked it up in Istanbul. That was the late vicar's late niece's stuff they were selling. Here—have a look for yourself."

Sergeant Torbin took the bowl in his hands with reverent precautions. Round the bottom, which he had not seen before, two winged horses pulled a chariot. He wondered what on earth he would ever have dared to do with so exquisite a piece if he had bought it.

The colonel said: "How the devil did you know I was a colonel?"

Bill did not like to say that he couldn't possibly be anything else, unless it were a general, but he was saved by the bell. The church clock struck six.

"Ah, they'll be opening now," said the colonel with satisfaction. "How about a drink?"

Bill Torbin murmured doubtfully that his train left at six thirty. The colonel announced that Falkstead station was only two minutes from the Greyhound, and led the way there.

The Greyhound was a handsome little pub, built of white weather-boarding with green shutters, but Torbin had no eyes for it. He was watching the precious cylix, which was being swung by one of its handles as carelessly as if it were a cheap ash-tray.

In the bar were four cheerful citizens of Falkstead drinking whisky, two boat builders drinking beer with the foreman of their yard, and, at a table near the window, the auctioneer and his clerk drinking sherry.

The colonel enthroned the cylix on the bar.

"What have you got there, Colonel Wagstaff?" the innkeeper asked.

"That, Mr. Watson, is a Greek drinking bowl."

"Never saw 'em used," Mr. Watson answered, "not when I was a corporal out there."

Wagstaff explained that this one possibly had not been used for two thousand years.

"Two thousand, four hundred," said the auctioneer, taking his pipe out of his mouth, "at the very least."

"Time it was!" Mr. Watson exclaimed heartily.

"What are you going to put in it?" the colonel asked.

"Who—me?" Watson said, not expecting to be taken literally.

The colonel said: "That Burgundy which you bought for the summer visitors is quite drinkable."

The cylix was about three inches deep, and

Continued on page 43

Published for the first time—the delightful sequel to the world's best-loved play, the story of . . .

When Wendy

Nina Boucicault and Hilda Trevelyan played Peter and Wendy in the first production of *Peter Pan*, at the Duke of York's in 1904

In this year's production at the Scala Theatre Margaret Lockwood has been cast as Peter and her sixteen-year-old daughter Julia as Wendy

Sydney Blow, actor, dramatist, author, and husband of Hilda Trevelyan, contributes this foreword to Barrie's epilogue.

THE writing of *Peter Pan* cost Barrie many sleepless nights. Often in his old ulster and muffler, his cap well pulled down over his eyes, he would leave his house in London and cross the road to a small iron gate in Kensington Gardens. The ranger of the park had given him a key to this gate. Round the gardens, in the shadowy night, Barrie would stalk, smoking his pipe and wrestling with the sequence of the play.

He was very disappointed that Charles Frohman, his manager, was in New York in 1904 and therefore missed the great applause and shouts that followed the final curtain on the first night of *Peter Pan*. When Barrie heard that Frohman was coming over to see the play on February 22, 1908—the last night of the 1907-1908 season of it—he decided that an epilogue should be played then, and then only, as a surprise for him.

The idea of writing this epilogue had arisen from the question Barrie was so often asked—"What happened to Wendy when she grew up?"

It was rehearsed in secret; nobody was allowed to breathe a word about it. The secret was so well kept that curiously enough even the Lord Chamberlain knew nothing about it. It was called *An Afterthought*.

That February night, when the curtain went down at the usual ending of *Peter Pan*, the house lights were not turned on and the audience sat in the dark. There was a pause while behind, scenery and dresses were changed. In the dark the audience kept applauding. Presently the Baby Mermaid—a small nightgowned figure—appeared before the curtain and made the following announcement: "My friends, I am the Baby Mermaid. We are now going to do a new act, the first and only time on any stage. Mr. Barrie told us a story one day about what happened to Peter when Wendy grew up, and we made it into an act, and it will never be done again. You are to think that a lot of years have rolled by, and that Wendy is an old married lady. You will be surprised to see what part I am going to play. . . ."

The curtain went up to reveal the Darling nursery. Twenty years had elapsed and Wendy was a real mother and the Baby Mermaid was her little daughter Jane.

When the curtain fell there was still more applause. Though the critics had not been bidden to attend that performance, by chance one was there, and the notice which he wrote of the epilogue was printed in the *Liverpool Daily Post* on February 24, 1908. He described the action of the scene and, referring to its reception, said: "The curtain dropped at eleven o'clock and the crowded audience cheered steadily until twenty minutes past, when they were rewarded by a glimpse of Mr. Barrie between Peter and Wendy. All those privileged to witness this never-to-be-forgotten and only performance of this striking act will acknowledge it to be the finest thing that Mr. Barrie has done."

When the curtain fell for the last time Barrie slipped some sheets of paper into the hands of Hilda Trevelyan, who had played Wendy, and said: "For you, Hilda. Now you know my afterthought."

The scene is the same nursery, with this slight change—Michael's bed is now where Wendy's was and vice versa, and in front of John's bed, hiding the upper part of it from audience, is a clothes horse on which depend (covering it), a little girl's garments to air at the fire.

Time early evening.

Lights in.

WENDY *emerges from bathroom. She is now a grown-up woman, wearing a pretty dress with train, and she sails forward to fire in an excessively matronly manner. She comes straight to audience, points out to them with pride her long skirt and that her hair is up. Then takes a child's nightgown off fireguard and after pointing it out with rapture to audience exit into bathroom. She comes out with her little daughter* JANE, *who is in the nightgown.* WENDY *is drying* JANE*'s hair.*

JANE (*naughty*): Won't go to bed, Mummy, won't go to bed!

WENDY (*excusing*): Jane! When I was a little girl I went to bed the moment I was told. Come at once! (JANE *dodges her and after pursuit is caught.*) Naughtykins (*sits by fire with* JANE *on her knee warming toes*) to run your poor old Mother out of breath. When she's not so young as she used to be.

JANE: How young you used to be Mum?

WENDY: Quite young. How times flies.

JANE: Does it fly the way it flew when you were a little girl?

WENDY: "The way I flew." Do you know darling it is all so long ago. I sometimes wonder whether I ever did really fly.

JANE: Yes you did.

WENDY: "Those dear old days."

JANE: Why can't you fly now, Mother?

WENDY: Because I'm grown up sweetheart; when people grow up they forget the way.

JANE: Why do they forget the way?

WENDY: Because they are no longer young and innocent. It is only the young and innocent that can fly.

JANE: What is young and innocent? I do wish I were young and innocent. (WENDY *suddenly hugs her.*)

WENDY: Come to bed, dearest. (*Takes her to bed right down stage.*)

JANE: Tell me a story. Tell me about Peter Pan.

WENDY (*standing at foot of bed*): I've told it you so often that I believe you could tell it to me now better than I could tell it to you.

JANE: (*putting bed clothes round them to suggest a tent*): Go on Mother. This is the Little House. What do you see?

WENDY: I see—just this nursery.

JANE: But what do you see long ago in it?

WENDY: I see—little Wendy in her bed.

JANE: Yes, and Uncle Michael here and Uncle John over there.

Grew Up

An afterthought on "Peter Pan" by

SIR JAMES BARRIE

When Wendy Grew Up **has been performed once, in 1908. After the production Barrie handed his manuscript to Hilda Trevelyan, who played Wendy**

The sequel is set, like this scene from the 1904 production of *Peter Pan*, in the Darling nursery. The photograph comes from the book *Fifty Years Of Peter Pan*. In the cast were George Hersee, Gerald du Maurier, Winifred Geoghegan, Hilda Trevelyan and Dorothea Baird

WENDY: Heigh ho! and to think that John has a beard now, and that Michael is an engine driver. Lie down Petty.

JANE: But do tell me. Tell me that bit—about how you grew up and Peter didn't. Begin where he promised to come for you every year, and take you to the Tree Tops to do his spring cleaning, lucky you.

WENDY: Well then. (*now on bed behind* JANE.) On the conclusion of the adventures described in our last chapter which left our heroine Wendy in her Mummy's arms, she was very quickly packed off to school again—a day school.

JANE: And so were all the boys.

WENDY: Yes—Mummy adopted them. They were fearfully anxious because John had said to them that if they didn't fit in they would all have to be sent to the Dogs' Home. However they all fitted in, and they went to school in a bus every day, but sometimes they were very naughty, for when the conductor clambered up to collect the fares they flew off, so as not to have to pay their pennies. You should have seen Nana taking them to church. It was like a Collie herding sheep.

JANE: Did they ever wish they were back in the Never Never Land?

WENDY (*hesitating*): I—I don't know.

JANE (*with conviction*): I know.

WENDY: Of course they missed the fun. Even Wendy, sometimes couldn't help flying. The littlest thing lifted her up in the air. The sight of a hat blown off a gentleman's head for instance. If it flew off, so did she. So a year passed, and the first spring cleaning time came round, when Peter was to come and take her to the Tree Tops.

JANE: OO! OO!

WENDY: How she prepared for him. How she sat at that window in her going away frock—and he came—and away they flew to his spring cleaning—and he was exactly the same, and he never noticed that she was any different.

JANE: How was she different?

WENDY: She had to let the frock down two inches. She was so terrified that he might notice it, for she had promised him never to have growing pains. However, he never noticed he was so full of lovely talk about himself.

JANE (*gleefully*): He was always awful cocky.

WENDY: I think ladies rather love cocky gentlemen.

JANE: So do I love them.

WENDY: There was one sad thing I noticed. He had forgotten a lot. He had even forgotten Tinker Bell. I think she was no more.

JANE: Oh dear.

WENDY: You see darling, a fairy only lives as long a time as a feather is blown about the air on a windy day. But fairies are so little that a short time seems a good while to them. As the feather flutters they have quite an enjoyable life, with time to be born respectably and have a look round, and to dance once and to cry once and to bring up their children—just as one can go a long way quickly in a motor car. And so motor cars help us to understand fairies.

JANE: Everybody grows up and dies except Peter, doesn't they?

WENDY: Yes, you see he had no sense of time. He thought all the past was just yesterday. He spoke as if it was just yesterday that he and I had parted—and it was a whole year.

JANE: Oh dearie Dear!

WENDY: We had a lovely time, but soon I

THE PLAY THAT HAS NEVER GROWN OLD

IT is fifty-three years since *Peter Pan* first flew in through the window and landed on the stage of the Duke of York's Theatre. Since then the play has been produced at every Christmas-time but one in London, and in theatres throughout the world. In the United States recently fifty-five million people watched a repeat performance on television.

When he died in 1937 Barrie left £167,000, one of the biggest fortunes ever amassed by a writer. But nearly ten years earlier he had given all rights in *Peter Pan* to the Hospital for Sick Children at Great Ormond Street, with the request that receipts from it should never be disclosed.

Barrie wrote *Peter Pan* for five boys whom he adopted. He set a fashion for thousands of parents by creating the name Wendy for one of his principal characters. He took it from the baby-talk of the daughter of his friend, the poet Henley. For the part of the dog Nana, Barrie had a skin copied from that of his Newfoundland dog Luath. One night, when the curtain call came for Nana, Barrie sent on Luath. Few people noticed the difference.

Peter and Wendy fly to Never Never Land . . . a poster advertising the original production of *Peter Pan*

had to go back home, and another year passed, and spring cleaning time came again. And oh, the terror of me sitting waiting for him—for I was another two inches round the waist! But he never came. How I cried! Another year passed, and still I got into my little frock somehow, and that year he came—and the strangest thing was that he never knew that he had missed a year. I didn't tell him. I meant to, but I said to him, "What am I to you, Peter?" and he said, "You are my mother"—so, of course after that I couldn't tell him. But that was the last. Many spring cleaning times came round, but never Peter any more. "Just always be waiting for me," he said, "and then some time you will hear me crow," "but I never heard him crow again. It's just as well sweetie, for you see, he would think all the past was yesterday, and he would expect to find me a little girl still—and that would be too tragic. And now you must sleep. (*Bns. rising.*)

JANE: I am fearfully awake. Tell me about Nana.

WENDY (*at foot of bed*): Of course I see now that Nana wasn't a perfect nurse. She was rather old-fashioned in her ideas—she had too much faith in your stocking round your throat and so on—and two or three times she became just an ordinary dog, and stayed out so late at night with bad companions that Father had to get up at two in the morning in his pyjamas to let her in. But she was so fond of children that her favourite way of spending her afternoons off was to go to Kensington Gardens, and follow careless nurses to their homes and report them to their mistresses. As she's old now I have to coddle her a good deal and that's why we give her John's bed to sleep in (*looking left*). Dear Nana (*flings kiss to the hidden bed*).

JANE: Now tell me about being married in white with a pink sash.

WENDY: Most of the boys married their favourite heroines in fiction and Slightly married a lady of title and so he became a lord.

JANE: And one of them married Wendy and so he became my Papa!

WENDY: Yes, and we bought this house at three per cents from Grand-Papa because he felt the stairs. And Papa is very clever, and knows all about Stocks and Shares. Of course he doesn't really know about them, nobody really knows, but in the mornings when he wakes up fresh he says, "Stocks are up and Shares are down" in a way that makes Mummy very, very proud of him.

JANE: Now tell me about me.

WENDY: At last there came to our heroine a little daughter. I don't know how it is but I just always thought that some day Wendy would have a little daughter.

JANE: So did I, Mother, so did I! Tell me what she's like.

WENDY: Pen cannot describe her, she would have to be written with a golden splash! (*Hugs her.*) That's the end. You must sleep.

JANE: I am not a bit sleepy.

WENDY (*leaving her*): Hsh!

JANE: Mother, I think—(*pause*).

WENDY: Well, dear, what do you think? (*Pause again*—WENDY *goes and looks and sees that* JANE *has suddenly fallen asleep.*) Asleep! (*Tucks her in bed, removes the clothes on screen, leisurely, folds and puts away and then* NANA *is revealed lying asleep in John's bed beneath the coverlet. She puts down light and sits by fire to sew. Pause—then the nightlight over* JANE's *bed quivers and goes out. Then* PETER's *crow is heard*—WENDY *starts up breathless—then the window opens and* PETER *flies into the room. He is not a day altered. He's gay.* WENDY *gasps, sinks back in chair. He sees* NANA *in bed and is startled.* NANA *moans, he backs so that he gets the wire off, comes forward avoiding* NANA's *bed, sees* WENDY's *dress, thinks she's playing a trick on him.*)

PETER (*gaily, jumping in front of her*): Hallo, Wendy! (*She turns lamplight away from her.*) Thimbles! (*He leaps on to her knee and kisses her.*)

WENDY (*not knowing what to do*): Peter! Peter, do you know how long it is since you were here before?

PETER: It was yesterday.

WENDY: Oh! (*He feels her cheek.*)

PETER: Why is there wet on your face? (*She can't answer.*) I know! It's cos you are so glad I've come for you. (*Suddenly remembers* NANA—*jumps up.*) Why is Nana in John's bed?

WENDY (*quivering*): John—doesn't sleep here now.

PETER: Oh, the cheek (*looking carelessly at* JANE's *bed*): Is Michael asleep?

WENDY (*after hesitating*): Yes (*horrified at herself*). That isn't Michael! (PETER *peeps curiously.*)

PETER (*going*): Hallo, it's a new one!

WENDY: Yes.

PETER: Boy or girl?

WENDY: Girl.

PETER: Do you like her?

WENDY: Yes (*desperate*). Peter, don't you see whose child she is?

PETER: Of course I do. She's your mother's child. I say, I like her, too!

WENDY (*crying*): Why?

PETER: Cos now your mother can let you stay longer with me for spring cleaning. (*Agony of* WENDY.)

WENDY: Peter. I—I have something to tell you.

PETER (*running to her gaily*): Is it a secret?

WENDY: Oh! Peter, when Captain Hook carried us away——

PETER: Who's Captain Hook? Is it a story? Tell it me!

WENDY (*aghast*): Do you mean to say you've even forgotten Captain Hook, and how you killed him and saved all our lives?

PETER (*fidgeting*): I forget them after I kill them.

WENDY: Oh, Peter, you forget everything!

PETER: Everything except mother Wendy. (*Hugs her.*)

WENDY: Oh!

PETER: Come on, Wendy.

WENDY (*miserably*): Where to?

PETER: To the little house. (*A little strong.*) Have you forgotten it is spring cleaning time—it's you that forgets.

WENDY: Peter, Peter! By this time the little house must have rotted all away.

PETER: So it has, but there are new ones, even littler.

WENDY: Did you build them yourself?

PETER: Oh no, I just found them. You see the little house was a Mother and it has young ones.

WENDY: You sweet.

PETER: So come on (*Pulling her.*) I'm Captain.

WENDY: I can't come, Peter—I have forgotten how to fly.

PETER: I'll soon teach you again. (*Blows fairy dust on her.*)

WENDY: Peter, Peter, you are wasting the fairy dust.

PETER (*at last alarmed*): What is it, Wendy? Is something wrong? Don't cheat me mother Wendy—I'm only a little boy.

WENDY: I can't come with you, Peter—because I'm no longer young and innocent.

PETER (*with a cry*): Yes you are.

WENDY: I'm going to turn up the light, and then you will see for yourself.

PETER (*frightened—hastily*): Wendy don't turn up the light.

WENDY: Yes. But first I want to say to you for the last time something I said often and often in the dear Never Never Land. Peter, what are your exact feelings for me?

PETER: Those of a devoted son, Wendy. (*Silently she lets her hand play with his hair—she caresses his face, smiling through her tears—then she turns lamp up near the fire and faces him—a bewildered understanding comes to him—she puts out her arms—but he shrinks back*). What is it? What is it?

WENDY: Peter, I'm grown up—I couldn't help it! (*He backs again.*) I'm a married woman, Peter—and that little girl is my baby.

PETER (*after pause—fiercely*): What does she call you?

WENDY (*softly, after pause*): Mother.

PETER: Mother! (*He takes step towards child with a little dagger in his hand upraised, then is about to fly away, then flings self on floor and sobs*).

WENDY: Peter, Peter! Oh! (*Knows not what to do, rushes in agony from the room—long pause in which nothing is heard but* PETER's *sobs.* NANA *is restless.* PETER *is on the same spot as when crying about Shadow in Act One. Presently his sobbing wakes* JANE. *She sits up.*)

JANE: Boy, why are you crying? (PETER *rises—they bow as in Act One.*)

JANE: What's your name?

PETER: Peter Pan.

JANE: I just thought it would be you.

PETER: I came for my mother to take her to the Never Never Land to do my spring cleaning.

JANE: Yes, I know. I've been waiting for you.

PETER: Will you be my mother?

JANE: Oh, yes. (*Simply. She gets out of bed and stands beside him, arms round him in a child's conception of a mother*—PETER, *very happy. The lamp flickers and goes out as nightlight did.*)

PETER: I hear Wendy coming—Hide! (*They hide. Then* PETER *is seen teaching* JANE *to fly. They are very gay.* WENDY *enters and stands right, taking in situation and much more. They don't see her.*)

PETER: Hooray! Hooray!

JANE (*flying*): Oh, lucky me!

PETER: And you'll come with me?

JANE: If Mummy says I may.

WENDY: Oh!

JANE: May I, Mummy?

WENDY: May I come, too?

PETER: You can't fly.

JANE: It's just for a week.

PETER: And I do so need a mother.

WENDY (*nobly yielding*): Yes, my love, you may go. (*Kisses and squeals of rapture.* WENDY *puts slippers and cloak on* JANE *and suddenly* PETER *and* JANE *fly out hand in hand right into the night,* WENDY *waving to them*—NANA *wakens, rises, is weak on legs, barks feebly*—WENDY *comes and gets on her knees beside* NANA.)

WENDY: Don't be anxious, Nana. This is how I planned it if he ever came back. Every spring cleaning, except when he forgets, I'll let Jane fly away with him to the Darling Never Never Land, and when she grows up I hope she will have a little daughter, who will fly away with him in turn—and in this way may I go on for ever and ever dear Nana, so long as children are young and innocent.

(*Gradual darkness—then two little lights seen moving slowly through heavens.*)

Sir James Barrie's sequel to "Peter Pan" is published by Nelson at 7s. 6d. under the title "An Afterthought."

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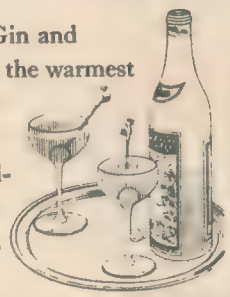
...FOR A BLISSFUL 'GIN AND ITALIAN'



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Treason rock

Continued from page 13

United States. However, if you wish only to speak your own language, an interpreter can be provided."

Colonel Mawzi lowered the cigarette holder so that it became a pointing bone of a finger. "It will not be necessary, Major Richmond."

"There is a cabin for Madame Chebir and her husband. And one for you, Colonel. Your servant will be looked after on the lower deck."

The colonel looked up. He was a hard, dedicated man, half Arab, half Turk.

"The cabin arrangements must be altered," he said. "Madame Chebir is very exhausted and would prefer to be on her own. I will share the cabin with Hadid."

"As you wish. Your meals you will take here alone. Your servant will attend to you. As the weather is hot, Lieutenant-Commander Burrows has given orders for a small portion of the deck to be reserved for you and an awning will be erected. . . ."

I might, thought John, *be a seaside landlady crying up the advantages of my lodgings.*

"How long will it be before we reach San Borodon?"

It was the colonel again. The other two might have been dead, for all the interest they were taking.

"Roughly two days to Port Carlos. That is the capital. From there we shall proceed at once to Mora."

"And then?"

"The arrangements for your. . . ." Richmond hesitated, rejecting the word "detention," and before he could go on Colonel Mawzi, without humour or charm, said: "Let us call it accommodation, Major."

RICHMOND nodded briefly. "All this will be explained to you. I am not at liberty to say more now than that I shall accompany you wherever you go. Anything which it is in my power to do for you——"

He got no farther than that. At this moment Madame Chebir stood up quickly. "For God's sake," she cried, "stop all this politeness. We know that if we don't behave we shall be on bread and water."

Hadid Chebir's hand came up and gripped her tightly on the elbow. He didn't say anything. He just held her, his fingers biting into her flesh. She was breathing heavily from her outburst. Richmond could see that she was close to tears.

She was a tall woman, little more than thirty, and more attractive than her photographs. He liked the look of her face. It had force and feeling. Nevertheless he had no intention of being bullied by her.

"I'll see you don't get bread and water," he said easily.

Hadid Chebir smiled and his hand dropped slowly from her elbow, but he still said nothing. It was Colonel Mawzi who spoke. He said: "Madame Chebir is overwrought. She has had a very difficult time."

"I understand."

"He understands." She laughed and raised her eyebrows with a sudden comical expression. "The very correct Major Richmond understands." She turned away from the table and moved towards the door. "I should like to go to my cabin."

She walked easily, the coat swinging away from her dress. Richmond drew back the curtain from the doorway for her. Neil Grayson was standing outside. Richmond said: "Madame Chebir is going to her cabin. Would you show her? The one which was to have been for Colonel Mawzi."

Grayson gave Madame Chebir a little bow as she came to the doorway. She stopped for a moment and looked at Richmond. Her eyes were tired and he could see she needed sleep.

Colonel Mawzi said, "Abou!"

The servant padded across on his bare feet and followed Madame Chebir to attend to her.

When they were gone, Hadid Chebir rested the tips of his fingers on the table before him and his head was lifted for the first time full towards

Richmond. He loosened the scarf at his throat with a little gesture.

"We are men, Major Richmond," he said, in a slightly husky but pleasant voice. "We understand what is happening. But my wife. . . ." Just for a moment the shoulders lifted. "Her decision to accompany me voluntarily was a difficult one. She feels strongly for me and shows it. You must not think her rudeness to you was personal." He smiled for an instant. "And now we should like to go to our cabin. . . ."

There was a water reflection through the porthole dancing on the wall above Madame Chebir's bunk. In a row of ugly pipes at the top of the wall, water made an intermittent clanking sound.

For a moment or two in the wardroom, Marion Chebir knew she had been on the point of letting go. She had felt battered and nervous and ready to scream. Hadid's grip on her arm had stopped that.

Two years . . . and everything had changed. The Hadid who had married

CATS—1

A home without a cat, and a well-fed, well-petted and properly revered cat, may be a perfect home, perhaps, but how can it prove its title?

Mark Twain

her—a working girl from Swindon with a counter job at Harrods—who had taken her to Cyrenia, taken her everywhere, to Europe and America, opened a new world for her and given her a new personality, had gone. This new Hadid whose hand came out, fingers biting into her flesh, had nothing for her.

This Hadid had no real need of her. They meant nothing to one another. But Mawzi had insisted that she come. Politically her presence with them was important.

She lay back and put her palms under her head, and her hair, pushed up by her fingers in disorder, lay against the white pillow. If anybody had ever told her as a girl that she would be here, that so many things would have happened to her. . . .

When she had met Hadid, she had been swept off her feet and up to the skies with happiness. Nothing her family could say made any difference.

She could see them sitting round the kitchen table in the Swindon council house. Already she was a stranger to them, with her London ways and her voice free of the Wiltshire accent.

Dear Mum, how worried and anxious she had been, with that little tremble of the upper lip which meant she was near to tears, the movement they all knew and which brought her father's hand out to give his wife's arm a rough caress. "Cheer up, Ma. Why shouldn't she marry him? He's a nice chap and he can't help his colour. What's colour anyway? No more than sunburn."

She could picture them all now—so far away and yet so near. Nothing you could do could stop that ache that came for them.

And she couldn't go back. Marion Heath was dead. Long ago. She was Marion Chebir now. And now part of Marion Chebir was dead.

Quite clearly she understood that she should never have come on this journey. But it was too late now. She was committed to her part.

Staring at the deck above she said aloud: "Damn Hadid and damn Mawzi. I hate them both." And then she turned over and pressed her face against the pillow. . . .

* * *

Looking down from the terrace of the San Borodon Government House where she was having breakfast with her father, Daphne Burrows could see the flying-boat on the far side of the harbour.

Last night, with the heat of the day still radiating from the ground, she had driven out with the captain to Dancey's Hotel and had had dinner with him. Her companion was a young squadron leader, and on top of four pink gins they had swum before dinner, both of them exhilarated. In the darkness of the water they had kissed, but that was all that was allowed. To take the edge off the boredom of Port Carlos she permitted herself so much.

It was a thing she had drifted into because of the disappointment of her own marriage, but she was already tired of it. Marriage with Teddy Burrows had promised her everything—but, when he had decided to stay in the Navy, things had begun to fall apart. It was odd, really, because she still had love and affection for him . . . but something had gone.

And because she was fundamentally a forthright person, Daphne was wondering now how she could tell her father that she meant to leave Teddy

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Burrows . . . not just a separation, but a divorce. Sir George would be shocked at first. He was easily shocked. And also he was very fond of Teddy and imagined that their marriage was a great success. But she had her own life to think about and, if it had to be reshaped, then she must do it tactfully and cleverly.

Sir George was a man with a rare but violent temper. She mustn't risk arousing that. He gave her a generous allowance: and he was a man of considerable wealth. It would be idiotic to jeopardize either his affection or support.

These morning breakfasts on the terrace were a ritual with them. It was then that they talked things over, made their confidences and their plans. But this morning she knew after five minutes that it would be useless to try and talk to him about herself. She saw that he was excited about this Hadid Chebir affair.

She smiled as she listened to him. Despite all her own shrewdness and management of him, she loved him.

He was saying: "... The Opposition, of course, are making all the trouble they can in the House. Any stick to beat a donkey. Everybody wants self-determination for Cyrenia, eventually. But it's got to be worked out harmoniously, and there must be justice and security for all the national elements involved. . . . Are you listening, Daphne?"

"Of course." Her eyes travelled down the slopes of Tower Hill, an ugly volcanic plug patched with neat rectangles of green banana trees, swept across the town and then out to sea. The Dunoon was due off San Borodon that morning sometime.

Sir George went on talking, his voice full and authoritative. . . . "The Cyrenian National Party is illegal and, while it exists, and as long as Chebir's followers are so intransigent, there is little hope of any lasting solution. . . ."

He stopped for a moment and leaned forward. Daphne was not even conscious that he had stopped talking.

He saw her reach absently for a cigarette from the box on the table and he held out his lighter. As she looked at him over the top of the flame they both smiled suddenly, and he said affectionately: "You were miles away."

"Sorry, Daddy."

"No need to be. It's dull stuff. Don't see why any woman should be concerned with it. Though I must say we were lucky to put Hadid Chebir and Mawzi in the bag. The wife's English, you know."

Daphne made a mouth. She didn't give a damn about any of the three. "She'll love Mora," she said, and went on: "What's this Major Richmond like?"

"Don't know him. Knew his father, Billy Richmond. He was at Sandhurst with me. Great point-to-pointer." Sir George pulled a letter from his pocket, cleared his throat a little to indicate a change of subject and handed it to Daphne. "This was in the mail. It's confidential . . . between us, of course. You know how I value your opinion on this kind of personal thing, and you've had a fair chance of summing young Grayson up. I'd like your views on this."

Daphne took the letter and reached for her sunglasses. She read it carefully. It was from an old friend of her father, the chairman of a large group of chemical industries and also an extremely influential man at the Conservative Central Office.

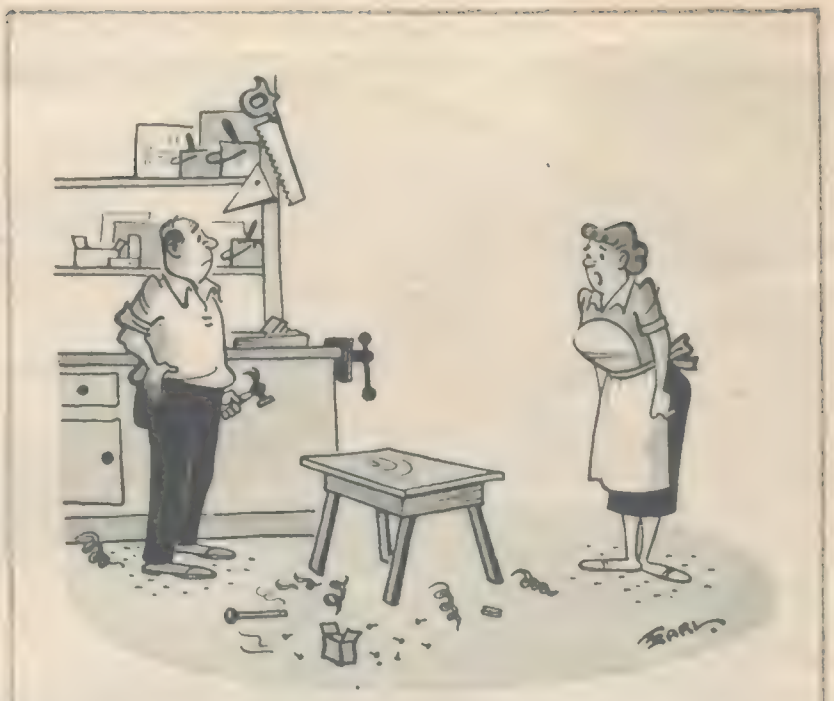
He wanted a frank report on Grayson. The young man had been noted, made himself felt. He had ambition tempered by a wise control and a diplomatic manner. A constituency could be found for him. . . .

She handed the letter back and was silent for a while. She liked Grayson, and she felt that he liked her.

"Well?" her father questioned.

"Grayson?" Daphne echoed. "You know the answer, and I agree with you. I'd give him ten out of ten for everything, except that he's a bit flamboyant at times."

"Yes, yes . . . but he'll lose that



"Never mind. I'll see if I've got a large cloth to cover it"

with time . . . or maybe the right wife. He's come up from nothing, no background. A man like that needs the right kind of wife, perhaps more than money."

Daphne said nothing. But behind the long, pretty face with its firm, rounded chin, an ice-cold thought had suddenly formed. She saw Grayson now more vividly and realistically than ever before.

It was the obvious thing. She was the kind of wife he needed. They both had ambition, but she had background. She could take him wherever he wanted to go; take him where she had once hoped to take Teddy.

Instinctively she knew that she could put it to Grayson, coldly, like a business deal and he would appreciate it, being neither shocked nor offended. She knew she would do it, but . . . the other things had to be right.

She stood up, stretching her arms

CATS—2

What an odd expression of the power to be irritable and the will to be pleased there is in its face, as the cat before the fire looks up at you!

Leigh Hunt

against the sun. She smiled at her father as she bent to kiss him.

"You won't mention this letter to Grayson, of course?" she said.

"Good Lord, child, no. It must come from the other end after I've written about him. But I'm glad for the boy's sake."

"So am I."

He patted her hand as she stood by him. She was a good girl, warm, generous-hearted and a great comfort to him.

It would have been a great shock to him if he could have had a transcript of her thoughts then. . . .

The Dunoon dropped anchor off the little village of Mora, from which the smaller of the San Borodon islands took its name. Mora clustered to one side of a shallow indentation at the northern tip of the island. On a clear night, looking north, the revolving lighthouse beam on the southernmost point of San Borodon could be seen.

As they ran in, Imray, the first lieutenant, stood with Richmond by the rail, pointing out the features of interest.

The whole island was dominated by the great peak of the dead volcano, rising about five thousand feet and sliced off untidily at the top like an egg. Two great ridges ran down from it to meet the sea in tall cliffs.

"The volcano is called La Caldera," explained Imray. "And there behind the village, that's the church—the tower with a sort of onion on top of it, behind those palms at the back of the houses. And that's Fort Sebastian—where you will be—on the headland."

As the Dunoon swung in, Richmond saw a crenellated tower on the seaward side, and a shorter one close up against the sheer face of the hillside. Between them ran a tall wall cut with embrasures. Built of grey-black stone, the fort looked neat and tidy, like some toy fortress. The entrance was hidden by a shoulder of land, but he saw a dusty road running down towards Mora and picked out the haphazard movement of goats on its surface.

Turning away from the rail to go to Burrows, he saw Hadid Chebir, his wife and Mawzi. They were under the awning, all of them standing up and watching Mora. The hot afternoon sun blazing down put them in deep shade and he couldn't see their faces well. They stood very still, like people waiting on the lip of the future, facing it with hostility.

But whatever front they put on, he thought, the strain was there. They lived for an idea. There was nothing tranquil about their lives.

In his opinion Marion Chebir was showing the strain more than the others. Then—as if it were to answer his thoughts, but in a way he would least have expected—the tall central figure of Hadid Chebir slowly swayed forward and collapsed to the deck.

Richmond was there before the other two seemed to have realized what had happened. Momentarily, as he kneeled by Hadid, he saw Marion Chebir's face. She was staring down and there was a little furrow of creases above her eyes. Then he forgot her. Hadid was lying on his side, one cheek against the deck, his mouth half-open.

Richmond rolled him over and began to loosen his collar as Imray came up.

"Get some brandy," Richmond said.

"No. It's not necessary."

It was Colonel Mawzi. He was on his knees beside Richmond. He pushed him aside and slid his arm under Hadid's head, raising it a little. "It is the heat, Major. Sometimes this happens, always with the heat and strain. . . ."

As he spoke, he raised his right hand and with the flat of the palm slapped Hadid's face. It was no gentle slap, but a hard, violent blow, the sound of which was like a paper bag bursting. Three times he slapped Hadid, cradling his head all the while. Hadid stopped moaning, lay still for a few seconds

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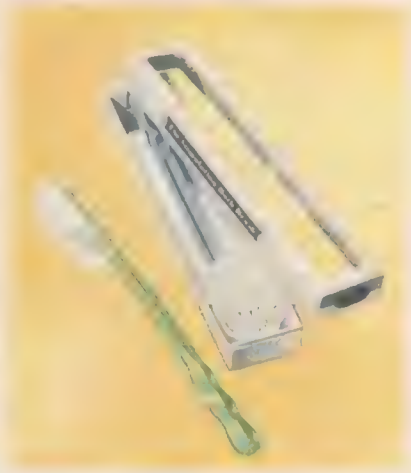

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and then very slowly opened his eyes.

"Madame Chebir and I will take him below," said Colonel Mawzi. "No, there is no need for anybody to help. We are used to this."

Richmond turned and moved off. The thing that stuck most in his mind was Colonel Mawzi. He had spared nothing when he had slapped Hadid's face. Richmond couldn't get out of his mind the sound of those ringing blows, and the sight of Mawzi's face, taut with ferocity, and the eyes shining with satisfaction as he struck. . . .

Richmond went ashore with Lieutenant Imray. He wanted to have a look around Fort Sebastian and settle where the quarters of Hadid Chebir and his party should be before he brought them ashore.

There was a jeep waiting at the end of the little wooden jetty. A sergeant in drill trousers and shirt with a Royal Army Ordnance Corps badge in his beret stood alongside the jeep. He came to attention and saluted smartly.

"Sergeant Benson, sir."

Richmond returned the salute. "Glad to meet you, Sergeant."

They got into the jeep and Sergeant Benson backed it,. edged his way through the crowd, ignoring the smiles and nods that came his way, and then started up the short, rough rise of road to the fortress.

"How do you get on with the islanders?" Richmond was sitting beside him. Lieutenant Imray was in the back.

"They're all right, sir. Friendly, bit childish, and some of them very light-fingered if you leave anything around."

"I want to have a quick look round, so that I can settle the quarters for these people. You can explain the layout as we go. You know what all this is about?"

"Yes, sir. We had a signal from Port Carlos."

"How many men have you got here?"

"About a dozen, sir. Including myself. One corporal, a lance-jack and the rest. . . ." He hesitated. "You'll see them, sir. We don't get the cream of the army here. . . ." He flushed for a moment, realizing that he might have put his foot into it, and tried to save himself by adding: "That is, sir, not as far as the men are concerned."

Richmond laughed. "It goes for officers, too, sometimes."

THE jeep topped a slight rise and then the road ran down gently to a wide, dusty plateau, hedged on the seaward side by tall spikes of cactus and agave. Beyond the cactus was a steep, hundred-foot drop to the sea.

Fort Sebastian sat on the end of the headland with the taller of its two round towers overlooking the water. A long stretch of crenellated wall faced them, and in its centre was a tall, arched entrance with its double wooden doors drawn back. A sentry with a fixed bayonet came to attention as they drove through into a narrow, rectangular courtyard, that was dominated by a vast dragon tree, a lily forty feet high with a trunk a good fifteen feet in circumference. It was a fantastic plant, with sap like blood.

For the next half-hour Richmond was busy going over the place. The fort had been built around the inner courtyard. At the seaward end was the main flag tower and, at the other end, but on the opposite corner, was a smaller, fatter tower, called the Bell Tower.

The Bell Tower, Richmond decided, was the place for Hadid Chebir's party. It had three large rooms which would serve as bedrooms, a bigger room above them for a mess room. There was a primitive bathroom and toilet built under the curve of the stone stairs between the level of two floors. The only entrance to the tower was from the parapet level, and was reached by a stone stairway to the courtyard. For his own quarters he chose a couple of rooms in the main gate wall, close to the large mess room.

He gave instructions for the rooms to be fitted out as comfortably as possible and then, before he left to go back to the Dunoon, he had Sergeant Benson call his party on parade and spoke to them.

Driving back to the Dunoon, he was worried about the guard position. With only twelve men it stretched things much too tight. Out of his men, too, there was the cook, who would not be available for guard duties. So far as he could see, he needed at least another six men, and even then, if his men were to have any free time off, it would still be less than comfortable.

On the Dunoon he wrote a letter to Sir George Hator, explaining the position to him, and asking that six men be drafted to him from the Port Carlos police force, while in the meantime a request was made to the War Office for proper reinforcements. But, until extra men came, he knew he would have to do what every officer had to do most of the time: make do, and still try to keep the men happy. . . .

The three prisoners came ashore before it was dark and were driven up to the fort. With Sergeant Benson in attendance, Richmond went to Madame Chebir's room after her cases had been carried in.

She turned and looked at him and then round the room. Against one wall was an old-fashioned bed, its frame full of brass knobs and ornate ironwork. A table, a cane armchair and a stout green barrack-room cupboard made up the rest of the furniture.

Richmond guessed what she was thinking. "I'm afraid it's pretty rough at the moment," he said. "You'll need a dressing-table and, of course, a mirror. Sergeant Benson will do something about that."

"Thank you. Also"—she nodded towards the cupboard—"some hooks to hang my clothes on."

"I can send somebody up to fix that this evening, sir," said the sergeant.

"There's no hurry; they can stay in my cases for tonight."

"About your cases. . . ." Richmond hesitated. He hated having to do this.

"What about the cases, Major?" Her voice had become wary.

"I'm afraid I shall have to search them. I regret this, of course. But it is a necessary precaution."

Her mouth tightened, but she gave an indifferent shrug of her shoulders and half-turned her back on them.

They went through the cases carefully. She had a very comprehensive selection of clothes. Good ones, too, Richmond noticed: Balmain, Dior, and shoes from Ferragamo in Florence. For a moment, as he went through a smaller case, the feel of silk in his hands embarrassed him.

He crossed to the bed and picked up her handbag. She was staring at him now, so hostilely that it annoyed him. Damn it, she must see that he had a job to do. A little ruthlessly, piqued by her attitude, he tipped the contents on to the bed: a purse, a compact, some keys, a silk handkerchief, sunglasses and a few odds and ends. He put them back in the bag.

"All right, Sergeant," he said. "That's the lot." And then, as Sergeant Benson moved towards the door, he said to her: "I apologize for this, but unfortunately——"

She gave an angry jerk of her head, rejecting his apology, and said quickly: "As far as I'm concerned, Major Richmond, you can go to hell."

He said calmly: "In the circumstances, I can see that that's a reasonable attitude. . . ."

Colonel Mawzi made no objection to the search. He had his tunic off and sat on the edge of the bed, smoking, as his cases were searched. He watched them in silence until they had finished, then he stood up and tossed Sergeant Benson his tunic.

"You'd better look through that, Sergeant." He turned to Richmond and raised his hands above his head. Richmond ran his hands over him and made him turn out his pockets.

With Hadid Chebir it was much the same, except that he lay on his bed and watched them. He seemed quite recovered from his attack. Richmond had to ask him to stand up to be searched. He did so, taking his time, ignoring them, his thoughts apparently miles away.

When they had finished, Richmond turned to Benson and said: "Sergeant, wait outside for me a moment."

With the sergeant gone, Richmond turned back to Hadid Chebir.

The man was staring at him, blinking. For a moment the long, intelligent, handsome face was stiff and uncompromising. Then, very slowly, the fleshy lips flexed as though they were trying to remember how to smile and he said: "It was a long time ago, wasn't it, Richmond?"

"A long time, yes."

"So long that I prefer to imagine it never was. This is the only time I shall refer to it. . . ."

WHEN H.M.S. Dunoon left Mora, she headed north for San Borodon and Port Carlos, but she did not continue long in this direction. Four miles out, she altered course to port and began to make a wide sweep right round the island, but well out of sight of it. By the time she was three-quarters of the way round the evening was closing in and, long before she was back again on her course for Port Carlos, it was dark.

It was a petty officer called Grogan who heard the sound of a plane high above the small clouds. "That's the Iberia plane," he said. "Madrid to Havana. She's late, too. . . ."

But it wasn't the Iberia plane for Havana. That had passed over an hour before and dead on time. This was a flying-boat working under Spanish charter for a company whose real nationality it would have been

A MEAL TO REMEMBER

by Nicholas Monsarrat

I'VE come to the conclusion that for a meal to be truly memorable, you have to be all of four things: young, tired, hungry and in love.

In 1930 I was certainly young—twenty, to be exact; and, on this occasion, I was certainly tired and hungry. For a fortnight I had been walking through some of the world's most noble scenery: from Bordeaux, in the south of France, through the wine country, across the high Pyrenees by that same route of Roncesvalles where Roland had met his death eleven centuries earlier, and down to the gentle foothills of Spain.

At sundown on that last day of walking I came to a small village called Burguete, and to a devastatingly pretty girl named Carlotta, the daughter or niece of the village innkeeper.

She was really the most stunning girl I had ever seen—tall, olive-skinned, black-haired, beautiful. As I talked to her I had already fulfilled the fourth condition. I was in love.

Dinner, served on a patio still warm from the Pyrenean sun, was very simple, very Spanish, very satisfying. There was onion soup, thick enough to stand a spoon in. There was something loosely labelled Arroz Barcelona—a great platter of rice overlaid with bananas, bits of chicken, onions, tomatoes and pimento, all steeped in olive oil and served as hot as the midday sun. There was a peach, warm from the garden wall. There was a coarse country cheese, probably goat. There were two litres of a white table wine, thin and dry, suited to follow a long day's dusty walk.

As I ate, and paused, and drank, and ate again, Carlotta came and sat at my table, and talked to me. I had perhaps a hundred words of Spanish, she not more than a dozen of English. It was enough.

While we were finishing the cheese she helped me to fill out the hotel registration form. There were dozens of questions, all in Spanish. Carlotta and I worked them all out, except one.

The one we couldn't translate was *Estado*. I tried a dozen alternatives. When Carlotta's English failed she relapsed into dumb-show, and presently I got it. *Estado*, it seemed, meant "Married or Single."

The night grew cool, with a smell of good earth and olive trees. No young man, after walking twenty-eight miles, eating and drinking enormously and falling in love with a shapely Spanish girl, could ever have been more happy. Then, alas, her mother made a dramatic entrance on to the patio, unloosed a torrent of horrified Spanish, and led Carlotta away.

It was probably the best ending of all, with just the right blend of frustration, despair and romantic yearning. At least, it has ensured that I've always made a bee-line for Arroz Barcelona on any menu ever since.

How to make Arroz Barcelona

Ingredients (for four people): 1 lb. rice, two sliced onions, one tin tomatoes, thyme, mixed herbs, a bayleaf, salt, pepper, one cup stock or water, 1½-2 cups cold, cooked chicken meat cut into small pieces (cold, cooked beef may be used), four bananas sliced down the centre, sliced red pepper, olive oil.

Boil the rice and keep warm in the oven (the rice should be cooked while the savoury mixture is simmering). Heat a little olive oil in a pan and when hot cook the onions until browned.

Add tomatoes, thyme, mixed herbs, bayleaf, salt and pepper and a cup of stock or water and simmer for twenty-five minutes. Then add the chicken meat and heat for a further five minutes. (If the savoury mixture becomes dry add more liquid.) Mix with rice, and serve.

Fry the bananas in a little hot fat for two minutes and serve two halves on top of each plate of rice. Sprinkle over each plate a few slices of red pepper.

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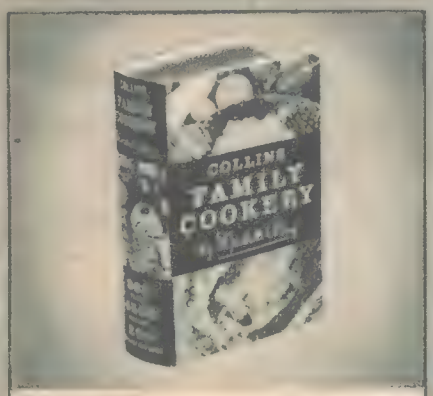

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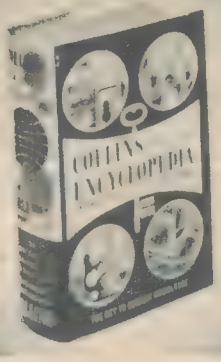

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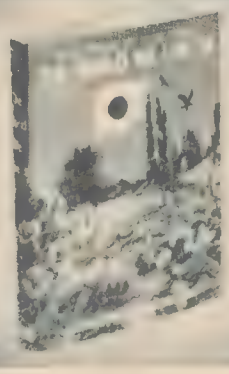

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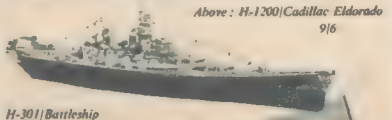

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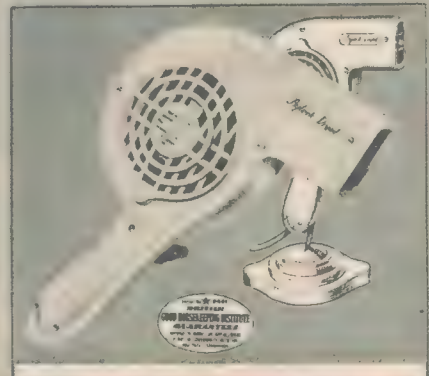

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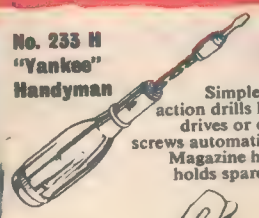

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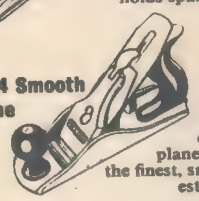

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difficult from the books to unravel with any truth. She was flying at eighteen thousand feet and had been at that height since she had left Aargub in the Bahia de Rio de Oro on the coast of Spanish Sahara five hours before.

Aargub was the kind of place where it was dangerous to show curiosity. The six men in the plane, too, were the kind who didn't ignore curiosity. They dealt with it unemotionally.

Apart from the pilot, they were all members of the Cyrenian National Army. The highest in rank and the leader of the party was Walter Mietus. From his cell in Cyrenia, Colonel Mawzi had briefed him for this mission. He was a major and his loyalty to any organization was governed by the money it paid him.

Mietus was German, with a Greek mother. At twenty-three he had been terribly wounded in the desert, fighting the British. Now he walked with bowed, awkward legs and his body was hard and shockproof, with the strength of a deformed oak. His blond hair was thinning and scurfy, and his squarish, not unpleasant face had the rough, sand-and-water bleached colour of a pine plank that has lain on a beach for months.

The others were all close to the same age as Mietus; Lorentzen, who had been thrown from some limbo into the French Foreign Legion, deserted, drifted half-way around the world and then back again; Plevsky, out of Russian captivity to the Polish Army of General Anders, to become a deserter in Cairo, and finally a guerrilla in Cyrenia; Roper, who spoke English with a gentle voice and what could have been the authentic echo of an Irish accent; and, last of all, Sifal, dark-skinned, the only true Cyrenian among them, and here because he was a first-class radio operator.

Now, as the plane droned its way westwards, Mietus, Plevsky, Lorentzen and Sifal played a quiet game of bridge, using the top of a packing case. Roper lay on his back reading.

It was a quiet, relaxed, contented group. Everything ahead of them was long rehearsed. Each man knew what he had to do, and each of his companions knew that he would do it.

For an hour after passing over H.M.S. Dunoon, the plane stayed on her westerly route. Then Max Dondon, the pilot, brought her round slowly in a circle and headed eastwards, losing height gently until he was about a thousand feet above sea level.

Three-quarters of an hour later he picked up the distant gleam of the San Borodon light. The plane turned south-east and began to draw in towards the west coast of the island of Mora. Max said something over his shoulder and Roper put down his book and went forward to stand behind him.

"Lights," said Roper.

Max threw a switch and all the lights in the flying boat, except the dim cockpit glow, went out. The bridge players sat in darkness. They went south another couple of miles. The flying boat dropped to the water like a great bird. Gently they taxied in. Roper touched Max on the shoulder and the engines died.

Each man then moved with the sureness of long drilling. The hull doors were opened and the fresh sea air swept into the tobacco-fogged interior. An inflated dinghy bloomed suddenly alongside and lay tugging at its painter in the drift. Mietus slid down into it and reached up for the packs.

When it was full, Sifal joined him. The dinghy was paid off on a long line. Another dinghy was dropped to the water and swelled slowly, with faint protests of the expanding rubber, to its full size. This was loaded, and crewed by Roper, Lorentzen and Plevsky.

Their only goodbye to Max was Plevsky's raised right hand as the pilot stood on the lip of the doorway. Max slipped the dinghy painter and they drifted away into the darkness, hauling in on the line which linked them with Mietus's dinghy.

The men in the two dinghies landed at the foot of a rough black pinnacle of cliff. The dinghies were hauled clear of the water and, without a word, Mietus and Roper, free of all encumbrance except the revolvers in their hands, moved away into the darkness. The others half-circled the dinghies, their backs to the sea, eyes and ears concentrating on the dark cliffs ahead.

Mietus and Roper came back, materializing suddenly from the gloom, their rope-soled shoes soft on the rough lava rubble of the beach. The dinghies were deflated and folded, and then, each man burdened with a heavy pack, they moved away from the sea. It still needed two hours to midnight and the rising of the moon, and by that time they would be well inland, high up on the slopes of La Caldera.

To be continued next week

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Ambrose and the laws of love

Continued from page 19

and insurance certificate carefully. "You have neglected to sign your driving licence," he said, as he handed it back. "That, too, is an offence. I shall report you for failing to sign your licence and for parking in a restricted street. Now take your car away."

Angelo said something rude and Roman under his breath and then went out.

"I am sorry," the girl said. "My brother is not always like this."

"Your brother?" Ambrose said. "Oh, I'm glad he's your brother."

"Tomorrow he will be different."

"Yes . . ." said Ambrose doubtfully. "Well, I'll—I'll probably see you again soon. I'm on the High Street all week."

But as he went out into the gathering gloom, he was resolved not to leave the prospect of further meetings with Giannina to anything as fickle as chance. And, although he did not smoke, on his way to the station the next day he called at the shop for cigarettes.

"It's a beautiful day, isn't it?" he said, as Giannina gave him change.

"Oh, it's wonderful," agreed Giannina enthusiastically. Their hands touched almost by accident.

Angelo Venturini looked from one to the other. Then he turned and stared at the thick yellow fog pressing against the windows. He raised his eyebrows. . . .

The next day, when Ambrose called again for cigarettes, he remained talking to Giannina for several minutes. Angelo watched darkly as his sister showed Ambrose the figures she had made for their Christmas window display.

"I wish you would not be so friendly with that man," he said when Ambrose had gone. "He is not to be trusted."

"That is your opinion," said Giannina. "I have a different one."

"That is everyone's opinion," Angelo said. "People have told me about this perishing Bates——"

"And you believe what they say? Oh, Angelo, my brother!" Giannina laughed scornfully. "Ambrose is a just man—a fair man. I admire him."

The change in Constable Bates since his first meeting with Giannina had not gone unnoticed in Bennington.

His air of vigilance had been replaced by a look of dreamy abstraction. And the ceaseless prowling, which everyone had found so unpleasant, had stopped. Instead, he now spent long periods around the arcade, allowing a carefree laxity to the rest of the street.

"Seems to have lost heart all of a sudden," said Bill Hodges, accepting a betting slip with a careful eye on the distant blue-clad figure.

It was a more accurate analysis than Hodges guessed. By the end of the week Ambrose was hopelessly in love. He realized this when he sat down to study the Payment of Wages in Public-houses Prohibition Act and found himself writing a sonnet.

And then, on the Monday before Christmas Day, Ambrose noticed a group of small boys leaving the shop. Carol singers, he thought. But then, as they came level with him, he saw that one of them had a cigarette packet.

"Just a minute, sonny," Ambrose said. He reached down and took the cigarettes. "What are you doing with these?"

"Please, sir, I—I got them for my dad," the boy said.

"Where did you buy them?"

"From the—the Italian man, sir. I wasn't going to smoke them, sir, honest."

Ambrose looked round at the group. "Turn out your pockets," he said. . . .

A minute later, holding five packets of cigarettes and followed by five small, tearful boys, Ambrose was striding towards the Venturini shop.

To give his potential customers some protection against the rain, Angelo had lowered the shop-blind over the pavement — something that old Dawson, the former owner, had been too arthritic ever to attempt. But, as an act of charity, it proved a sad mistake on Angelo's part. Ambrose, it is true, passed easily under the iron support of the blind; unfortunately his helmet didn't accompany him. It was swept from his head, bounced off one of the small boys, and rolled across the pavement.

Ambrose was a tall young man but, even in his boots and measured to the top of his helmet, he was not eight feet high. And under the Town Police Clauses Act it was an offence to place any blind, shade, covering, awning or other projection above the footway at a height of less than eight feet.

Red-faced, Ambrose retrieved his helmet and stamped into the shop. His hands trembled slightly as he showed Angelo the five packets of confiscated cigarettes.

"I understand you sold these to these boys?" he said.

"So?" said Angelo.

"Do you know it is an offence to sell cigarettes to minors?"

"Miners?" For a moment Angelo was perplexed, then he nodded. "Ah, you mean if they smoke down the mine—*boom—finito?*"

Ambrose drew a deep breath. "No," he said. Then he switched to Angelo's native tongue. "I mean it is an offence to sell cigarettes to persons under the age of sixteen—an offence for which I shall be happy to report you."

Giannina gasped. "He speaks Italian," she said. "Oh, what duplicity, what deceitfulness!"

Somewhere within him Ambrose heard a voice urging caution, but he ignored it. His temper was at white-heat. "Furthermore, horse-faced tobacconist," he went on, "your shop-blind constitutes a dangerous

Christmas Market

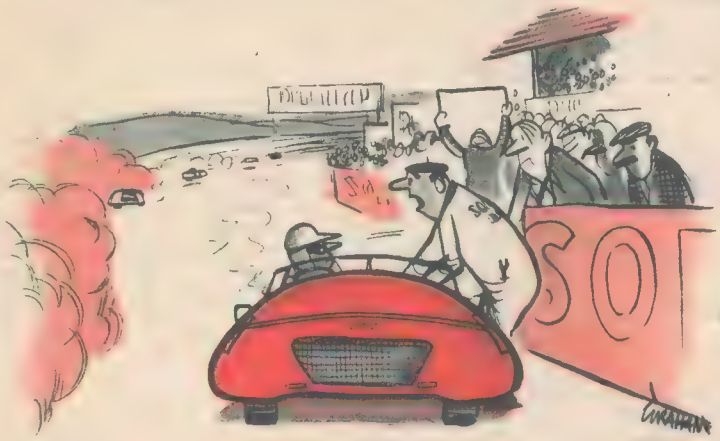
by MABEL FERRETT

This is the Christmas market; the busy square
As a globule of light in the darkness, the stalls and the flare
Of acetylene lamps over lino and mingled hardware,

The cries of the vendors, the holly, the icicled trees,
The tangerines covered with foil and the mugs of teas
Drunk by huge gaberdined men under awnings that freeze.

Now the rabbit-scuf snowflakes begin, once again, to fall
Mottling the street from the pitch to the boundary wall
Of houses and shops and the cinema and the town hall.

Then, the last-minute-bargains, the greetings, the laughter, the fun
'Til the counters are emptied, the clock strikes, the market is done
And the wide square is empty. Christmas, at last, has begun.



"You're doing fine. You're lying third . . . fourth . . . fifth . . . sixth . . ."

obstruction and for that offence also I shall report you."

He turned on his heel and strode out.

"Contemptible dog!" Angelo muttered. "Persecutor of innocent tradesmen." He turned to his sister. "Did I not tell you he was not to be trusted?"

Giannina nodded. Her eyes filled with tears.

As the afternoon wore on and turned into evening, Ambrose's temper cooled. He realized what he had done. Despite the poor start to their acquaintance, he had been hoping to achieve some degree of friendliness with Angelo, if only for Giannina's sake. Now he had reported the fellow four times in a week. Soon the summonses would start rolling in.

Few girls, Ambrose thought gloomily, would appreciate seeing their brothers turned into hardened criminals. He stood disconsolately a few yards up the street, waiting for the shops to close. If he could see Giannina on her way home, even if only for a minute, he might be able to explain. . . .

Half an hour passed and suddenly the shop door opened. Angelo and Giannina came out, heads bent against the slanting rain, and hurried towards him.

Ambrose stepped forward, nerving himself. "Giannina," he said, "can I. . . ."

"Come, Giannina," Angelo said. "It is a long walk—to the car park."

He stood listening to the tap of her heels on the pavement. Then he turned and went the other way.

At a few moments to ten, when all the officers on the late turn were edging towards the station, Ambrose was still pounding dolefully about the High Street. For the third time that evening he stopped, nostalgically, to admire Giannina's window display. It was the Nativity scene: the infant Jesus, Mary and shepherds and the Three Wise Men. She had made the figures beautifully, he thought.

The more he studied the scene, the more realistic it appeared. For instance, he had not noticed earlier the way she had contrived the flickering lantern-light that made dancing shadows across the manger. . . .

With a start, Ambrose saw that the dancing light came not from the window but from the back of the shop. He went to the door and stared in. The light was in the back room. Suddenly he realized that the place was on fire.

Ambrose thought quickly. The nearest telephone box was a good hundred yards away. But there was a telephone inside the shop. . . .

He raised his boot and smashed in the glass-panelled door, used his truncheon to break off the jagged edges of glass, and plunged in. Smoke curled acridly about him. Coughing and spluttering, he found the telephone and put through an emergency call to the fire brigade. Then, taking off his cape, he ran into the back room.

The fire had started among a pile of packing crates and cardboard cartons in one corner. It had spread, now, to the whole of the rear, shelf-lined wall. Red tongues of flame licked across the floor.

Ambrose tackled the pile of packing crates first. If he could get them spread out, he thought, it might be possible to extinguish them one by one.

Careless of his hands, he began lifting the burning boxes and spreading them across the floor. Smoke was choking him and the heat seared his flesh. His helmet fell off and a stray spark ignited his hair. He dowsed it with his smouldering gloves and used his cape to beat at the flames among the packing crates.

Sweating and dizzy, he realized that he was getting the fire under control. Already the flames seemed less intense, although the smoke was thicker than ever. With his clothes smouldering in several places, he reeled across the room and began beating at the burning shelves. It seemed years since he had phoned for the fire brigade.

His oilskin cape began to burn and he dropped it on the floor and stamped on the flames. As he did so, he fell sideways against the shelves and the whole structure collapsed. Ambrose toppled quietly among the smoking debris just as the first of Bennington's volunteer firemen raced into the shop. . . .

WHEN Ambrose recovered consciousness, it took him some time to remember what had happened. He lay with his eyes closed, thinking. Someone was bandaging his head. From far off he heard Giannina's voice saying: "Will he be all right, Doctor? He is not badly hurt?"

"A knock on the head, a few surface burns . . ." Ambrose recognized the voice of Dr. Fisher . . . "but nothing to worry about, my dear."

"Oh, he was so brave, so very—see, his eyes open," Giannina said.

Ambrose found that he was lying on the floor on a stretcher. Giannina was standing above him. He smiled faintly and then closed his eyes again because it was such an effort to keep them open.

"He sleeps," said Giannina softly. Her voice changed. "Tomorrow, Angelo, you must apologize to Ambrose for the harsh things you have said about him."

"Yes, Giannina," Angelo said. "I was wrong about him. He has saved the chocolate novelties, I think. Some are soft but——"

"And we will invite him to Christmas dinner," said Giannina.

Ambrose smiled. He felt himself being lifted and carried out. With an effort he opened his eyes as he passed through the doorway and found that he was staring at a notice on the lintel: "E. J. Dawson—licensed to sell cigarettes and tobacco."

There was an offence in that somewhere, Ambrose thought dizzily . . . the Registration of Business Names Act—something to do with trading under an incorrect name.

"Have to — have to tell Angelo tomorrow," he mumbled. And then he fell asleep.

THE END

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Like most men, he knows a good thing when he sees it. So does she, for this lucky man's happy Christmas is already in the bag.

Happy the man who wakes up to the gift of a lifetime this Christmas morning—and every morning after. Happy the woman who chooses such an outstandingly welcome present.

Distinguished in appearance, superb in performance. From every point of view a REMINGTON Shaver is *the* gift you'll be so proud to give ; the gift he'll be so thrilled to receive.

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REMINGTON

THE WORLD'S FINEST SHAVERS

"We had Christmas decorations today instead of spelling"

Desperate journey

Continued from page 23

hopeless, Captain. You'll have to divert."

After a pause the voice came, stronger now: "I've got so close, I'll come over you and see."

"Okay if you say so. You've got the beacon."

He was busy now, working methodically; working as a man does when another man's life is thrust into his hands. For one moment he broke off to ring through to the ambulance and fire points, telling them to get their vehicles to the windward end of the runway and put their headlights full on.

Constantly he was in touch with the aircraft. "You should be approaching us now from the south-east. Can you see a glow?"

"Not a glimmer."

Bill crossed to the big window, pushed it open and craned outside, listening. At first, nothing. And then he could hear a faint hum, somewhere up there, muffled. Into the microphone he said calmly: "I can just hear your engine. Go into the circuit and come down five hundred feet."

"Okay."

After a short eternity, Bill asked: "See anything?"

"Not a sausage. No, hang on a minute. I've got your glow. What's visibility down there?"

"Twenty yards, maybe thirty. You can't make it."

"I'll go round once more and come down another five hundred."

Green joined Bill at the window. They tried to follow with their ears the course of the aircraft.

Suddenly it roared past, startlingly low. Bill said into the radio-telephone: "Watch it. You came right over the control tower from east of south-east, at about one hundred feet."

A pause. Then, from the air: "I can still see you. I'm coming in now, smartish, from the south-east corner."

For a moment Bill felt wildly compelled to forbid him. But then he said: "Okay. Watch out to starboard. There's a hangar about fifty yards from the edge of the runway, height sixty-five feet. No other obstruction. Good luck."

He left Green staring from the window and got through to alert the fire and ambulance points again. "He's going to try it. Stand by."

Bill stepped quickly back to the window. And suddenly there were the navigation lights of the aircraft, low—too low, and heading straight for the hangar. . . . No, just clear. . . . Then the landing light groping downwards like a trembling finger. Elms, clearly, had suddenly seen that he was too low; he managed to lift her a fraction, just to clear the boundary fence, and then he was down—bouncing badly; in danger of a ground loop, but down. Bill signalled the jeep to lead him in.

When, five minutes later, Elms came into the tower, pulling off his jacket, Bill unscrewed the big vacuum flask and poured him a mug of coffee. "Nice work, Captain."

"All due to your brilliant met. officer who cleared the snow off at the right moment." Elms grinned and handed over the packet of drugs.

It was at that moment that Bill realized the messenger from the hospital still wasn't there.

He took up the outside phone and raised Dr. Redinge. "The pilot got down with the drug."

"Thank God!"

"But your messenger isn't here. He must have stuck. Can you send anybody else?"

"We could," said the doctor. Then, after a pause: "But I think it might be too late. Can nobody come from your end?"

"Leave it to us," said Bill, "We'll get it there somehow."

"Hurry, please," said the doctor.

Bill put the phone down and said: "I'll take it myself. I've got my car."

"Want me to come with you?" asked Green.

"No. Someone must be here. Ring through and get Perkins over, will you, please? And perhaps you can keep watch until he gets here."

"Sure," said Green. "You cut off."

Bill turned to Elms. "There's an airport staff party where they'll be delighted to see you. Like to go?"

"Suits me."

"Green will order the jeep to run you over there. You'll see my wife there. Make some sort of excuse for me and console her."

Bill got into his coat and wound his woollen scarf round his neck.

"I'd try the lower road if I were you," said Green.

Nodding, he went out. His car was only a small family model and old; but he kept it in good trim. Luckily he had fitted chains to the wheels the night before. . . .

CLEAR of the next village he suddenly got the full force of the snow. The little wiper struggled but could not cope with it. He stopped, put down the side window, reached round with his hand to clear the worst, and the wiper picked up again.

At last he reached the point where the road forked—the upper and lower routes over the moor. Green had said to try the lower, so he edged to the right. There would be about two and a half miles now to Wilverton, by this road.

Although his feet were freezing and his arms ached with gripping the wheel, Bill Marchant rejoiced. It wasn't always quite such a stooge job, after all, being an air traffic controller.

Then he saw the drift straight

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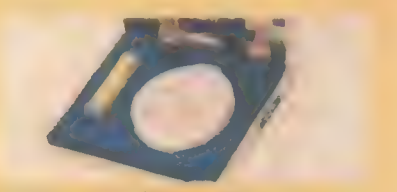

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" . . . And he's clinging to what I sincerely hope is an empty violin case"

ahead of him. Unthinkingly he jammed on his brakes, skidded right round and ended with the back of the car buried in the snow. White-faced, he got out. The drift completely blocked the road.

He got in again and tried to drive off. The back wheels spun. The car settled a little farther back into the drift. He got cautiously out. Crouching down, he thought he could make it if he could scrape sufficient snow away from the back wheels.

By the time he had done so his arms were burning with pain and the sleeves around them soaked with melted snow. But the car was free. Gingerly he started the engine and crawled away from the snowdrift. There was nothing for it now but to return to the fork and try the upper road.

Turning the hairpin bend was perilous, but he got round. The snow on the upper road seemed more even; no hedges to collect drifts. But the wind was stronger. And, of course, the road itself rose far more steeply.

He put the car into bottom gear, not daring to move faster than a crawl. Then he felt a nasty little jerk as the wheels spun, lost grip, caught again, then spun. He touched the accelerator, the engine roared pettishly, but the wheels still spun and the car began to slide softly over towards the ditch.

Hastily Bill thrust out the clutch, gently applied the brake. He brought the car to a standstill without going into the ditch, but at every attempt to move her she slipped a little farther back. At his last try, gunning the engine farther than was wise, the car suddenly skidded a semicircle again and faced downhill.

He cut the engine and got out to look. There wasn't the slightest hope of getting that little car up that hill. The only way to get to Wilverton was to walk—at least two miles over the upper road in this blizzard. And it was possible to fall and die in a blizzard.

Alternatively he could get into the car and drive back—report by phone to the hospital and go to the party, and Polly. After all, he had tried. He couldn't do the impossible. But then he put his sodden hand against his pocket and felt the bulge of the packet of drugs. It was a child's life he held in his pocket. Already one man's life had been risked for it.

He left his car where it stood and began to trudge stolidly over the moor towards Wilverton. The snow was blinding, and by the time he got to the top of the first hill he had fallen heavily twice, the second time twisting his knee.

The road took one more rise before levelling out over the moor top. The wind was much stronger. He could feel the coldness of his body turning to pain, and he was veering from one side of the road to the other.

He reckoned he must have at least a mile and three-quarters to go, and once again he fumbled for the bulge in his pocket. He muttered to himself that it was a child's life, and stumbled on a few paces.

Then he stopped. He ought to consider seriously the likelihood that he would not reach Wilverton. There was still time for him to turn and struggle back to the car, in which he could drive home. Nobody could blame him if the road were impassable. But he took a good breath and plodded on towards Wilverton.

The snow which was blinding him forced him now and then to close his eyes. He was sure that he was already suffering from illusions. When he opened his eyes, the snowflakes that fell in front of them seemed almost to be glowing as though they threw out light of their own.

Then he suddenly understood, and swung round. The lights of a car were crawling up the hill behind him. He turned and staggered towards them, waving his arms.

"Important drugs . . . in my pocket," he gasped.

The car drew up beside him and he clambered at it, mouthing that he had got to get to Wilverton, there was a child. . . . Then he stood there bewildered. He thought he heard Polly's voice—Polly who was angry with him, Polly who was at the party with Elms, the young pilot. Yet it was Elms's arm that went round his shoulders and helped him into the back of the airport's jeep.

"It was your wife who insisted on coming, son," said Elms cheerfully, "once she found out what you were up to. I was all for staying there and getting drunk, but she thought you'd freeze to death in that little car. So off we set."

"Are you all right, Bill?" Polly was asking him.

"Sure, sure," he mumbled. "The lower road's blocked, and the car wouldn't take the hill to the upper road, so I had to start walking."

"Polly thinks you're a bit of a hero," confided Elms, starting the jeep.

"Come off it. You flew the stuff up from London."

"But that was comfortably in the air, not *walking*," said Elms with horror.

Polly asked: "We'll get through all right now, won't we?"

Yes, Bill thought, *they'd be sure to get through in the jeep with its four-wheel drive.*

"And will the drug save the child's life?"

"Hope so," said Bill.

"My," she suddenly exclaimed, "you *are* cold. And your clothes are soaking and frozen." She put her arms round him and pulled him close to the warmth of her body. Her mouth was close to his ear. "Nice work, Bill Marchant," she whispered.

"All part of the job," he muttered. "Sorry about the party."

She said nothing for a while, but tightened the grip of her arms round him. Then: "I hope the kid lives. It'd be a sort of wonderful present."

"Present?"

"Christmas present, Bill."

"Good heavens," he said. "I'd clean forgotten it was Christmas. Happy Christmas, darling. Happy Christmas, Captain Elms."

"Lights of Wilverton ahead," said Captain Elms. "And the compliments of the season to you, son." THE END

The night the colonel sank

Continued from page 27

just held the bottle which Mr. Watson emptied into it.

"See?" said Colonel Wagstaff. "Like rain in a dry garden."

The company gathered round the bar. The colonel raised the bowl in both hands and took a hearty pull. "Tastes a bit odd," he remarked, passing it on to Bill. "Still, you can't have everything."

The loving cup went round the eleven of them, and Mr. Watson.

"Fill her up again," said the auctioneer.

The next round was the colonel's, and after that there was a queue for the job.

"If you take the seven forty-five bus to Charterford," the colonel suggested to Bill, "there's sure to be a train from there."

The auctioneer said a fatherly good-bye to all, tripped over his bowler and left. Bill looked at the clock. He felt bound to mention that it was 7.40.

"By Jove, so it is," said the colonel.

They all piled out into the street and cantered through the village to the yard of the Drill Hall, where the Charterford bus was waiting.

The bus was not lit up, and there was no sign of the driver. The colonel swore it was a disgrace and that Sergeant Torbin would never catch his train at Charterford.

"What time does it go?" Bill asked.

"I don't know. But you might very easily miss it. It's a damned shame. I've a good mind to teach them a lesson. Anybody want to go to Charterford?" The colonel tossed the bowl on to the driving seat of the bus and was just about to sit on it. Bill rescued it with a quarter of an inch to spare, and found himself on the way to Charterford.

The colonel was roaring along between the hedges when the auctioneer's clerk leaned forward and tapped him on the shoulder.

"Colonel," he said. "It is eight forty-five the bus starts, not seven forty-five."

The colonel jumped on the brake. "Of course," he said. "Changed it last week. Well, I'll teach 'em to monkey with the timetable."

And he let in the clutch, found top gear and put his foot down.

Sergeant Torbin cuddled the bowl, and this time only bumped his elbow.

"We'll get out here, chaps," the colonel said, pulling up so close to the hedge that they couldn't and had to get out by the driver's door—all except the boat-builder's foreman, who broke the glass over the emergency exit and managed to make it work. "The Bull is just up the road. . . ."

The Bull was a small riverside pub, empty except for two farm hands, a ferryman and the landlord, whose name was Baker.

Acting on the colonel's instructions, Mr. Baker had just filled the bowl with gin and tonic when a police car drew up outside. The colonel sprang into action.

"Right, Bill!" he snapped. "Our fault. Won't get you mixed up in it."

He pushed the sergeant on to the window seat, made him lie down and covered his uniform with a couple of overcoats. When the bus driver, accompanied by a full load from the police car, crashed through the door, he was kneeling at Bill's side and bathing his face with gin and tonic out of the bowl.

"Now which of you gentlemen . . ." a policeman began.

The colonel kept his handkerchief firmly over Bill's mouth and explained in a voice which was the very perfection of quiet respectability that he had bought a priceless Athenian cylix, and that an American art dealer had endeavoured to steal it from him outside the Greyhound.

Foiled by these gallant citizens and especially by this poor fellow—he tenderly mopped Bill's forehead with gin—the art dealer had made his escape in a bus. They followed, some on foot, some clinging to the vehicle. The bus stopped just down the road, and the fellow bolted into the darkness before they could catch him.

"And you couldn't stop him?" said another policeman.

"He had a gun," said the boat-builder's foreman, and choked into his handkerchief.

After telephoning a description of the art dealer to county headquarters, the police escorted the bus back to Falkstead. . . .

Some time later, Mr. Baker put the auctioneer's clerk to bed upstairs and that left Bill as the only one with any worry in the back of his mind. At 9.30 he suggested that he ought to telephone for a taxi.

"Don't you bother," the colonel said. "We'll cross the ferry here, and then it's only half a mile to the junction."

They all piled out on to the landing-stage. The ferryman unchained his punt, and twice took Bill and the colonel nearly over to the other side. The first time he turned round in mid-stream without noticing it, and the second time he had to put back because the boat-builder's foreman had fallen off the jetty while waving good-bye.

Bill and the colonel landed the third time and set off along the creek-side path in single file. After a quarter of a mile, the colonel, who was leading, sat down and began to laugh.

"Bill," he spluttered. "I knew guineas would fox you. Unsporting to take advantage of an ally. Funny at the time, yes. Bill, I present you with the bowl."

"No, Colonel, I won't take her."

"Got to take her. If you won't I'll pitch her in the river."

"Go on. You pitch her," said Bill.

The colonel did. The cylix flew like a discus into the darkness and landed with a plop on the tidal mud.

Bill plunged after it. He squelched out towards the water, while the smell of primeval slime rose from the pits where his legs had been.

The sounds of progress became less violent. There was silence. . . .

"Colonel, I'm stuck," Bill said.

"Nothing to bother about, boy. We're used to it round these parts. Lie on your stomach."

"I can't. I'm up to my chest."

"Then I'll come and pull you out."

The colonel advanced until he sank over his knees, and then took off his coat. Keeping hold of one sleeve, he swung the other over to Bill. Bill reached for the coat, missed, and floundered like a stranded porpoise until the choice between sinking head first or feet first became urgent. The colonel took a step forward and flung the coat again. He, too, went in up to his chest.

"I guess this mud is covered at high water," Bill said after a pause.

"Float a battleship," the colonel agreed cheerfully. "But there's an hour in the ebb still. Nothing to worry about. Somebody will come and look for us. You'll see. Do you know any songs to pass the time, Bill?"

Bill's repertoire was good for an hour and a half. After an hour of the colonel, Bill said that he thought the tide was rising.

After another ten minutes Bill said: "I guess I'll learn some of those songs of yours, Colonel, when I've got my breath back."

"Repeat the words after me, Bill, facing the land."

In competition with each other, they so concentrated upon the job in hand that neither heard the approaching craft until she was three hundred yards away. With the fast tide under her, she was abreast of them before their

CATS—3

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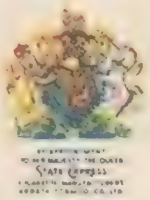

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yells for help met with any response.

"'Old on," shouted the bridge. "It ain't easy, yer know."

The captain certainly knew his channel well. Going gently astern, he edged into the bank until the bows towered above them. Riding the crest of a wavelet, right under the forefoot of the ship, was the missing bowl.

"Look out!" Bill shouted. "Reverse engines!"

The engine-room telegraph rang violently. White water swirled at the stern. Their rescuer withdrew, and the tide promptly swung the ship in a quarter-circle with the bows as centre. The captain went ahead in a desperate effort to regain steerage way, and there she was, aground fore-and-aft across the channel.

"Knew that would 'appen," said the captain, addressing them conversationally from the bows. "Well, catch 'old."

The rope fell by the colonel. The captain, the mate and the one deckhand dragged him, wallowing, through the mud and up the side of the ship.

Sergeant Torbin followed, but left the rope in order to plunge sideways and recover the bowl.

The captain led the way to a small saloon under the bridge. It reeked of fug and decayed vegetables but was gloriously warm.

"What are you?" the colonel asked the captain.

"Charterford garbage scow. Takes it from the dustcarts and dumps it overboard at forty fathom, see?" He unlocked a first-aid cabinet and produced a bottle. "You'd both better 'ave a drop of rum, though it don't look to me as if it was so long since the last one."

"I admit with pride that we have been celebrating the acquisition of a priceless antique," the colonel answered.

"This 'ere?"

"An old Greek drinking bowl, Captain. I'll show you. A slave took the jug, so"—the colonel seized the bottle of rum—"and emptied it into the bowl, so."

"Hey!" the skipper protested.

"And then it went round like a loving cup."

The colonel took a sip and with both hands passed the bowl courteously to the captain, who could only drink and pass it on to Bill. Bill despairingly lowered the level by a quarter of an inch, gasped and passed it to the mate.

An hour or so later, Bill was showing them a dance he had learned in the South Pacific, when he began to think the saloon was in motion.

It was. The stern of the garbage

"Have you been a good boy?"

scow, gently lifted from the mud, swung across river with increasing speed and thudded into the opposite bank. Bill made a dive for the bowl as it slid across the table and landed in the captain's lap.

Rushing out, the captain got jammed in the doorway with the mate. The engine-room telegraph rang like a fire engine. The colonel, flung on to the floor, sat there cross-legged, shaking with laughter. Bill, still resolutely clutching the bowl, dropped his head on the table, and fell asleep. . . .

It was light by the time the town, the castle and the municipal rubbish dump of Charterford were in sight. The clock on the church tower made the time eight thirty.

Accompanied by Bill, the colonel strode up the main street with a guiltless air, so full indeed of a casual manliness as he greeted an occasional acquaintance that only one of them thought it proper to comment on his appearance.

"Showing our friend here some sport," said the colonel. "Duck, y'know. Mallard right. Teal left. Got 'em both. Lost me balance. And this gallant fellow hauled me out."

As they resumed their squelching progress up the High Street, Bill remarked that he had sounded exactly like a British colonel on the movies.

"A very useful accomplishment," the colonel agreed, "which has enabled me before now to rescue allies from well-deserved courts martial. Later in the day which is now upon us, Bill, I shall accompany you to your commanding officer and obtain for you a mention in your home town paper and probably a medal from the Royal Humane Society."

"What's that?" Bill said.

"It gives medals. Did you not leap into mud of unknown bottom to rescue me?"

"Don't mention it, Colonel. It was the least I could do." Bill paused. "Say, wasn't it the bowl I was after?"

"The values are quite irrelevant, Bill. Me or the bowl—the bowl or me? We will now go into the Red Lion here for a bath and breakfast."

"Will the bar be open yet, Colonel?"

"Oh, that'll be all right. They know me there."

"Then I'm not going in with this bowl," Bill said firmly.

"Fresh herrings, Bill. I can smell 'em. And bacon and eggs to follow."

"We can have breakfast at a tea shop."

"Too respectable. They wouldn't let us in. . . ."

Sergeant Torbin, desperately searching the market square for safety, saw the open double doors of the Charterford Museum. He ran, vaulted the turnstile in the vestibule where the door-keeper was just changing into his uniform coat, and charged down an alley of Roman tombstones into a collection of stuffed foxes and weasels marked *Natural History*. Hesitating wildly, he saw a door to his left with CURATOR on it. He leaped through it, and found himself facing a desk where a very tall wisp of a man in his seventies was quietly cataloguing.

"You take this," Bill said. "Lock it up in your safe, quick."

The curator tremblingly took the bowl, and at the sight of it instantly recovered an almost ecclesiastical self-possession.

"But this is an article of great value," he intoned.

"I know it is. You've no idea of the trouble I've had preserving it from destruction," said the colonel, who was now also upon him.

"This—um—er—has dispossessed you of it?"

"Lord, no!" said the colonel. "It's his."

"Colonel, it is yours," said Bill, with what he hoped was finality.

The colonel took the bowl with both hands, pledged an imaginary draught to the gods and held it high above the stone floor of the curator's office.

"I've nowhere to keep it," Bill screamed.

"Oh, that's all that is bothering you, is it?" the colonel exclaimed. "Well, what's that damned owl doing?"

A stuffed barn owl in a Victorian show-case stood on the curator's work bench. Wagstaff lifted the glass dome from the ebony base and removed the owl, which immediately disintegrated into dust and feathers.

Then the colonel sat down and printed a neat card:

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SERGEANT WILLIAM TORBIN,
U.S.A.F.

He laid the bowl upon the ebony stand and propped the card against it.

"That will keep *you* quiet," he said, replacing the glass dome. "The sergeant has only got to write to you to get it, I suppose?" he added fiercely to the curator.

"Yes, yes, but——"

"Any objection to the Red Lion now, Bill?"

"No, but——"

"Good," said the colonel happily. "It will be a pleasant change to drink out of glasses once more." THE END

The office of secret war

Continued from page 17

more was continually being asked of us.

Agents were going in greater numbers now, often into areas where the conditions were unknown. These men justifiably felt inadequately briefed.

. I am afraid that nothing could be done about that. To some extent we were hampered by the incommunicativeness of other arms of the Intelligence and Secret Service. Each little organization treasured its special nuggets of information with the zeal of prefects hanging on to their privileges. We could get nothing out of them.

The wing commander phoned me again later that week. "The old man's pretty sceptical about the ability of your chaps to do this engine-shed job at all," he reported cheerfully. "Are you sure you wouldn't rather we took the whole operation off your hands?"

"I said we'd do it. We'll do it."

In Lille, Michel had arranged for the railwaymen to take small quantities of explosives in their lunch baskets into the locomotive sheds. The explosives were hidden in the men's lockers, and each day the quantities grew. By March Michel was ready. The final scheme would take place on a moonless night. He and three men would enter the marshalling yards wearing engine drivers' overalls and carrying revolvers. Two other sets of men, under Sylvestre, would be in the yards adjacent to the locomotive sheds. If they heard fighting they were to come to the help of Michel and the others. If not they were to keep off.

The night of March 2 was dark and wet. Michel's courier alerted his men and they assembled in the soot-stained house of Pierre, a locomotive foreman, at 1 a.m. Sylvestre and his men were to be in their places at 1.15 a.m. The fuses would be of ten minutes each and the blow-up was timed for two o'clock.

Pierre led out of the tiny house and down an alley leading to the yards. Far off an engine hooted. A lantern bobbed near the shunting yards. Pierre, Michel and the others stepped over the lines carefully—some were electric—and filed down between two rows of goods vans. The rasp of a match sounded ahead. They froze.

Pierre drew them into the gap between two trucks and across empty lines towards the sheds. Suddenly they stopped. Michel went forward. Two men were standing at the corner of the shed—he could just see them. One left. Michel went quickly forward and got in behind a fuse-box. The other man walked towards him. Michel prepared to spring. The man turned. It was Sylvestre.

"Michel? There are two sentries at the far end of the sheds. You must go in this end. If the sentries make any move to enter the buildings we will follow them. If they come round to this end we will kill them if necessary."

Pierre opened the padlock on the door of the sheds with his foreman's pass-key. The men slipped in and shut the door. Pierre led straight to the locker room and within minutes the lockers had been emptied of explosive.

Outside, Sylvestre waited. A quarter of an hour passed. Twenty minutes. It was a quarter to two. The slightest gleam of light came from the shed door. A torch shone wanly in Sylvestre's direction. "Scatter," he said. "Mission completed."

"Scatter," Michel said to Pierre and the others. "Well done. Get going." Michel watched them go and smiled. He walked slowly away, his eyes on the sheds.

Promptly at two a dull orange bubble of flame burst at the far end of the sheds and a muffled crump followed. Almost at once the sheds were shattered with an uncontrollable series of explosions. Here, there and everywhere gouts of flame were spewed out into the night. Running footsteps and cries of pain and alarm. . . . In the glare of the burning sheds Michel could see guards and railwaymen running. A German was blown clean off the ground by a new explosion. The far end of the huge sheds crumpled slowly down, like an animal driven to its knees, and the flames stuttered and caught at the fallen wreckage. By twenty past two the sheds were an inferno. Michel ran down the alley towards Pierre's. Behind him the fires grew and the wail of sirens filled the night. . . .

Not until five o'clock the following afternoon did I receive a decoded message from Max in Paris. It read: MISSION COMPLETED WHAT NEXT.

I phoned Bomber Command. "They've done it," I said.

"Have they though? How much damage have they done?"

"Look, they completed the mission. What do you want—photographs?"

"Might be an idea, old boy."

"I'll see what I can do. . . ."

The fires had not been extinguished in the locomotive shops till nearly noon next day. By that time the whole enormous works were gutted skeletons. The engines in the shops had been badly damaged. The lines were blocked by twisted wreckage and the Germans were in a frenzy of anger and frustration. The entire yard was swarming with Gestapo men and officials.

"Send photographs," Michel said bitterly, repeating my message. "There's headquarters for you."

The yards were closely guarded now, and the well-dressed business man with the camera slung round his neck had to go through a control.

"What do you want in the yards?" snapped a Gestapo man.

"I represent the Société Nationale d'Assurance Maritime et Industrielle. There is a claim against my company for part of the damage in this dreadful affair. I must make a report."

They inspected his papers and allowed him to pass. He walked sadly towards the scene of destruction, took out his camera and sorrowfully began to photograph the mess.

In this way Sylvestre took pictures

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of the wreckage sufficient to convince even Bomber Command. A week later they arrived on my desk, "*avec les compliments de la Résistance.*"

I passed them on to the wing commander, with the acknowledgments. His reply came by return: "Compliments of Bomber Command to our friends of the Resistance. . . ."

Many men who did brilliant work for S.O.E. started in the ranks, yet all possessed the vital quality of initiative. Inflexibility was the most dangerous drawback to a man's selection, but we never encouraged eccentricity. Our officers, when in uniform, were among the smartest in London.

One of our greatest agents, too modest to tell his own story and too wise to tell it to others, was called Hilaire. He started off the war as a batman—prior to that he was a mining technician in Belgium—and his simple ambition was to take out to dinner after the war the officer whose batman he had been at the beginning of it. When this was achieved he was a colonel and his erstwhile master a major.

Hilaire typifies the sort of person who was best suited to our work. He appeared on the surface a man of the most unassuming character, and you would certainly pass him without a second glance; this was something we were not unwilling to have the Germans do to our men. Underneath he was a person of great patience and determination.

Hilaire built up a series of *réseaux* in the south of France with the patience of a genuine strategist. Not one of his many *réseaux*, in an area the size of Yorkshire, knew of the existence of any other. Yet when the call came for action, before and after D-Day, Hilaire's *réseaux* were so well organized that each was perfectly co-ordinated with its neighbour. Hilaire's network totally destroyed the German troops in the south-west of France.

We could not, of course, have functioned at all without the brave and unflinching support of the ordinary Frenchman. The Germans had nobody on whom they could rely, either in France or over here. As a result, I was never the victim of any assassination attempt, though the Germans did in fact know my name.

The truth probably is that somebody told it under interrogation, for to give my name would endanger nobody, and that was precisely the sort of information which, under agonizing torture, a man would give to stave off further pain.

I DISCOVERED that the Germans knew my name through a piece of information which reached us through Spain. It consisted of a secret document, spirited out of Gestapo headquarters, which purported to give the British Secret Service set-up. The plan was highly fanciful and contained almost every famous name the Germans could think of as well as those, like my own, really associated with secret work. My name became known to Hitler himself, and he is reported to have said: "When I get to London I do not know who I shall hang first—Churchill or this man Buckmaster."

Several enemy agents did try, though without success, to come over to this country through our escape lines and join our organization. Our agents in the field had to be constantly alert against infiltration, as one of our men called Henry Peulevé discovered for himself.

Henry was another of those who came to us on their own initiative. At first a sergeant in the British Expeditionary Force, he heard that French-speaking Britons were scarce, and phoned the War Office. He was told by our selection board that his French was not really good enough, but his name went forward and he was trained as a wireless operator.

He was very keen to get to the field and when in June, 1942, Claude de Baissac, the leader of a group in the Bordeaux area, urgently needed an operator, we agreed that Henry should go.

The routine of the drop seldom varied. The plane flew at about six hundred feet, and the agent hung ready over the aperture. At the despatcher's shout of "go" he let himself fall, the static lines opened his parachute, and within about fifteen seconds he was on the ground. . . .

"Go!"

Henry fell, and then the webbing of his 'chute caught him up like a netted fish. Yet he seemed to be falling much too fast. He yanked frantically at the lines of his 'chute, which had not opened properly.

Branches snapped and then the ground smashed into him. He rolled over with a groan and groped for his pistol. Silence. He banged the release mechanism of his 'chute and the harness fell away. He tried to stand and pain cut him like a knife.

He reached for his vacuum flask, containing tea well-laced with rum, and took a long gulp. He knew that he had broken his leg.

Silhouetted against the skyline was a farmhouse. He dragged himself forward over the stony ground, his forearms raw with the effort, and reached the farm door.

An old lady answered. "Help me, madame," Henry said.

"Who are you?" she whispered. "Are you—a Gaullist?"

"That's right," he replied, "a Gaullist."

"So am I."

"Hide me," was all that Henry could groan.

The old lady went and fetched her son, a strong and bronzed farmer, who agreed to hide Henry in a disused part of the house.

They gave him a bottle of brandy to drink and said they would send for a doctor next morning, ignoring his delirious protests.

"How did this happen?" asked the doctor.

"I fell out of a tree—a fig tree."

The doctor looked at the farmer, shrugged and said: "But there are no figs at this time of year, monsieur. . . ."

Henry had to go to hospital. But first he gave the farmer a message to take to Claude in Bordeaux. The wireless set which had been dropped with him had to be located speedily.

The fact that Henry was not betrayed either by the farmer, the doctor, the nuns at the hospital or the barber who came to shave him, indicate the solidarity of the Resistance. Claude even arranged for Henry to have visitors and for a wireless to be installed so that he could listen to the B.B.C. news.

Peter Churchill came specially from Cannes to see him—a gross breach of security, but evidence both of Churchill's team spirit and the confidence he had in himself.

When Henry had been in hospital for two and a half months the doctor said that he could be moved. He had had a desperate time. The bones in his leg had failed to knit, and a further operation had become necessary.

Claude ordered Raymond, a Spanish anarchist refugee, to look after Henry during his convalescence. Raymond was a burly Basque, ruthless and without fear.

Claude had fixed for them to rest up in a safe farm near Bordeaux, and they travelled there by ambulance.

The farmhouse was commonly used by escaping prisoners of war going south, and the farmer and his wife were hardened resisters. Henry rested in the house while his leg slowly healed.

One day, when the farmer and Raymond were out in the fields, Henry was sitting in the orchard reading when he heard a stranger talking to Madame Anjou, the farmer's wife. He took his pistol from his pocket and slid it under the blanket which covered his knees.

"Here's a visitor for you," said Madame Anjou. The stranger was a man of about twenty-five, fair-haired and blue-eyed, who walked with the agreeable looseness of an R.A.F. officer.

"Sit down," Henry said, "I can do with some company. How did you get here?"

"Came from Paris," the man replied. "Is it all right to talk English? My French is jolly rotten."

"Escaped from a p.o.w. camp?"

"That's the ticket."

"When were you captured?"

"I was shot down, old boy, over Holland. About a month ago."

"What were you flying?"

"Spitfire. Tell me, how long have you been here?"

"A while," Henry replied. Something about the man's manner made him uneasy. "Where were you stationed, in England?"

"Near Cambridge."

The stillness of the summer day gave the scene a deadly innocence.

"Really?" Henry said. "Do you know that little pub near St. Peter's College? The—what's it called . . .?"

The man scratched his head. "I can't remember."

"The College Arms," Henry said, as if suddenly remembering.

"Of course," said the other.

An insect rasped in the high grass. There is no St. Peter's College at Cambridge, nor is there a College Arms.

The sound of voices came over the hedge. The men were returning from the fields for their lunch.

"Tell me," went on the R.A.F. officer, "how are you going to get across the frontier from here?"

"I don't know," Henry said, fingering the gun. "And if I did I wouldn't tell you."

"I say, what do you mean?"

Henry undramatically uncovered the pistol. "Just sit there and don't move."

Raymond stopped in the gateway of the orchard: "What's going on?"

"We have a new friend," Henry said grimly, "come to question us."

At once the R.A.F. man burst into voluble French: "I assure you, monsieur, I don't know what this chap's talking about. . . ."

"Your French has suddenly improved," observed Henry dryly.

Raymond went inside the house, then returned carrying a box. "Who are you?" he smiled. "Who are you, please?"

"I am an escaped R.A.F. officer."

Still grinning, Raymond hit the man in the face. "No," he said. "The truth."

Madame Anjou came and said: "Lunch is ready."

"We're busy, madame," Raymond said. "We will be in any minute, but just now we are busy."

A small sapling grew under the orchard wall. Raymond picked up his box. "Watch me," he said. "Carefully." He lit the fuse and stepped back. The explosion twisted the slim tree to green pulp.

Raymond took a length of rope from the box, and another detonator. "If you would be so good," he said to the stranger, pointing to a tree, thick and gnarled, in the middle of the orchard.

Raymond grabbed the man's arm, dragged him across and lashed him to the tree. Raymond fastened the detonator to the tree. Casually he uncoiled

WHY?

THE window cleaner pushed open the bottom frame of Mr. Brown's bedroom window and stepped out on to the sill. Supporting himself by gripping the bottom of the top frame with one hand, he started to wipe the window.

But the sash cords of the bottom frame were broken and it was only staying up because the frame itself was ill-fitting. Suddenly it came crashing down, trapping the window cleaner's fingers. He let go his hold and fell into the garden.

Later, he sued Mr. Brown.

"This man has no case," Brown's counsel told the judge. "A householder is not responsible for seeing that windows are safe for window cleaners to hold on to."

The judge agreed with this general rule, but still awarded the window cleaner damages.

WHY? *A barrister explains the judge's ruling on page 49*

THREE COMPLETE STORIES

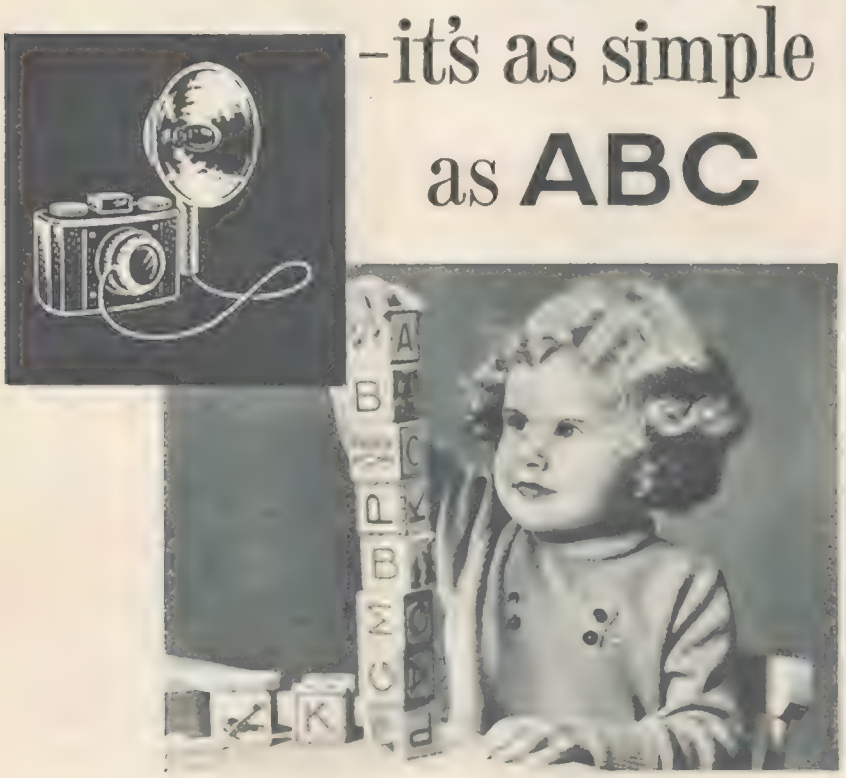
The Coukla
by KATE MANGO

I Shall Remember
by NORAH BURKE

Wolf Dog
by ARTHUR MAYSE

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

Flash Photography –it's as simple as ABC



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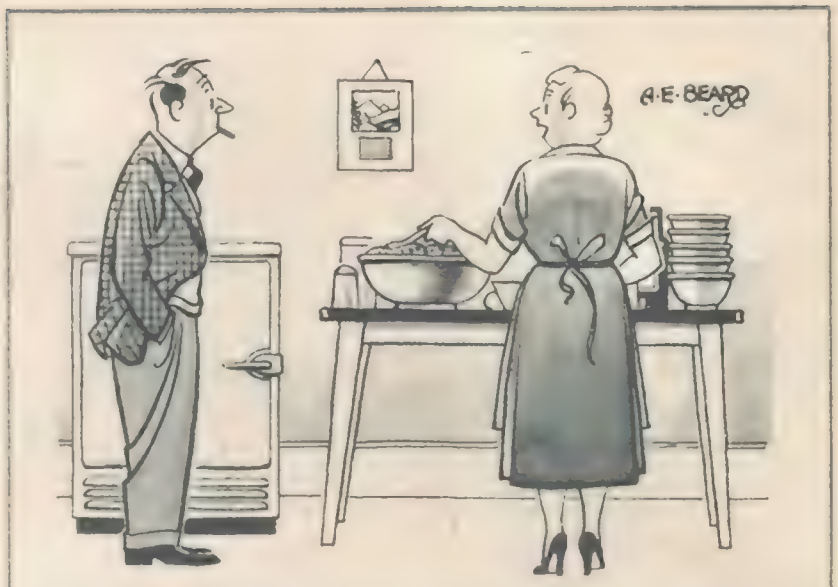

"I think we'd better put half-crowns in this year, dear"

the fuse and fretted it between his fingers, shortening it. "No sense in dragging these things out," he said amiably. "Don't you agree?"

The stranger watched him with cold terror. Raymond gave Henry a wink and lighted a match. "What do you want to know?" the man said.

"Who are you? Who sent you here? What do you know and how much have you told?"

"I am a German officer. . . ."

The man told them everything. He had been educated in England and had been sent to try to blow the escape line south from Paris. So far he had not made a report.

With the man's confession the tension had gone from the scene. It was almost with regret that Henry said: "You know what we must do, don't you?"

The man nodded. "The fortune of war," he said stiffly.

Raymond put his hands on his hips and said: "We may as well get it over. I want my lunch. Give me the gun."

Henry said: "Wait." He turned to

CATS—4

If it be true that nations have the cats they deserve, then the English people deserve well, for there are none so prosperous or so friendly in the world.

Hilaire Belloc

the German. "Have you a last letter to your family?"

"No thank you."

"Are you a Catholic? Would you like to see a priest?"

"I would like to see a priest."

Henry said: "Raymond, go into the village and get a priest." Raymond opened his mouth. "Do as I say, Raymond."

The Basque left the orchard and came back with an aged priest. The two of them, the priest and the German, turned their backs to the others and the priest whispered. Henry held the gun in the man's back.

At last both men crossed themselves and the priest with a last look at the three men walked from the orchard out into the lane. Henry pulled the trigger. The man fell. Raymond took the revolver and put it to the man's temple and fired again.

"Just for luck," he said.

Raymond's sense of humour was on the robust side and he insisted on parcelling up the body of the German officer in a packing case. It was sent by rail to Gestapo headquarters in Paris with a note which read: "With the compliments of British Intelligence."

Soon Claude de Baissac came to the farm with plans for Henry's escape into Spain.

Henry—still unable to walk without two sticks—accompanied Claude into Bordeaux. He waited there for several weeks, then moved on to Pau by bus. Here he contacted an abbé who led him into a tiny room where vestments were hanging. "We shan't be disturbed here," the abbé said, removing his cassock to reveal a chest covered with medals.

"Sergeant in the Foreign Legion," the abbé explained. "But I took up the ministry afterwards. One needs security." He glanced upwards for a minute to acknowledge the eternal nature of his security.

The abbé showed Henry the stained glass windows and the carved pulpit, of which he was quite as proud as he was of the hand grenades stored under the porch and the pistols in the loft.

That night Henry went to the foot of the mountains with three other escapers and a band of saccharine smugglers. At 9 p.m. the march began.

By midnight Henry was in agony from his leg. But not until nine the next morning, after zigzagging back and forth across the snow, did they reach Spain. He had climbed through the mountains for twelve hours on a leg which could barely support him on a walk down the street.

When he returned to England he came up to see me in the flat in Orchard Court. "Sorry I made a mess of it," he said. "When can I go back and try again . . . ?"

Starting with the destruction of the engine-sheds at Troyes, we extended our scope, planning new targets in consultation with the Ministry of Economic Warfare, and approving suggestions by men in the field. Almost every officer was trained in demolition and we taught them the best way to dislocate rail traffic by derailments.

The important thing was to derail trains in cuttings, where they blocked the line, and not on embankments where a train might roll clear. Embankments were favoured, however, for troop trains, since the crash and the possible fire might cause greater loss of life. Our men became so skilled that they were able to derail a train without even tipping it over; the charges exploded beneath the leading coaches and the train simply ran off the line and parked itself in the cutting.

Michel extended his organization in Lille with great rapidity. Morale was high and recruits could be selected from many willing young men.

The Gestapo did everything it could to infiltrate the organization. Two double agents were caught and shot and their bodies dumped outside Gestapo headquarters.

One day Michel himself was driving a truck full of small arms ammunition from Cambrai into Lille when he was ordered by a Milicien to stop.

"Your papers."

The policeman looked at them and handed them back. Michel started up

the engine again when the policeman said: "What have you got in the back?"

"Hospital material," Michel replied. "Bandages and things like that."

"I'll take a look. Open it up."

Michel put a hand on the Milicien's arm. "Come now, officer, we all have to live. . . ."

The Milicien drew his pistol.

Michel walked round resignedly to the back. As they rounded the corner his arm flashed up, knocking aside the gun; the other hand slashed across the man's windpipe.

Michel leaped back into the truck. A whistle blew. Another Milicien ran out into the road. Michel accelerated and sent him sprawling into the gutter.

Michel turned the van into a side lane by a sawmill and pulled up behind a pile of wood. He jumped out. Two Miliciens on bicycles appeared. One fired a shot. Michel ducked through the sawmill yard and heard the whine of a police siren.

He had to warn Thomas Franck, a butcher whose van he was using.

He ran up some wooden steps to the yard-foreman's office and snatched up the telephone there.

At last he heard Thomas's voice: "Hallo?"

"Thomas!" He could see two Miliciens now, in the yard. "Get out. Get your family out and warn Sylvestre. Hurry, hurry . . . !"

"What is this. . . ?"

"This is Michel. Do as I say."

One of the Miliciens fired a shot which smashed the office window.

The foreman came into the yard and was stopped by the Miliciens. Michel threw open the door of the office and shouted: "Stand clear." The foreman jumped aside and Michel fired at the Miliciens.

With a scream of sirens a German van drew up. Michel had five clips of ammunition. He called to the foreman: "Tell them I went that way."

Michel ran between two high stacks of sawn wood towards the canal. There were five Gestapo men at the far end of the lane. Michel turned. Two Miliciens fired at him. He fired back and one dropped.

The men at either end began advancing. Michel was trapped. He started to try to climb up the steep sides of the woodpile, firing as he went. A Milicien knelt and shielded his eyes against the setting sun. Michel fired off one clip of ammunition and paused to reload. The Milicien fired and Michel fell, clutching at the side of the stacked wood. The Gestapo men advanced, firing their sub-machine guns. Michel lay there, firing back. He dropped one man—the foreman told Sylvestre the story—then collapsed.

So died Michel, one of the bravest and most effective of our men. He had so organized the Lille patriots that they could continue the fight with undiminished efficiency.

Michel was not forgotten, for when I myself visited Lille in October, 1944, I noticed a huge banner suspended over the boulevard de la Liberté with the initials O.F.A.C.M. printed on it in enormous letters. I asked Sylvestre what they stood for.

"They are the initials of our organization," he replied.

"O.F.A.C.M.?"

"Organization Française des Amis du Capitaine Michel," Sylvestre explained. "One does not forget a man like Michel."

NEXT WEEK: We smash a factory —with the boss's permission

WHY?

See page 47

BECAUSE, said the judge, although a householder does not have to take any special precautions to protect window cleaners, he must still safeguard against unusual dangers. Broken sash-cords could be an unusual danger. Therefore, Mr. Brown was liable. It would have been different if the cords had been merely worn.

(This verdict is based on actual cases.)

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HERE ARE JUST A FEW
EXAMPLES OF MR. THERM'S MODERN-AS-THE-MOMENT COOKERS

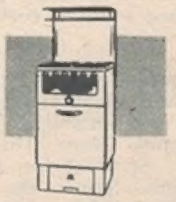
A De Luxe model for the family cook

A fold-away high-level grill, strip lighting for the four-burner hotplate and a five-hour automatic timer —complete with the new Roto-Roast spit —make family cooking a pleasure. £65. 2. 0

Stream-lined elegance

A handsome and efficient cooker —with hotplates that light themselves, and an oven with a new "low" setting for all-day simmering. Large high-level grill. £47. 19. 6

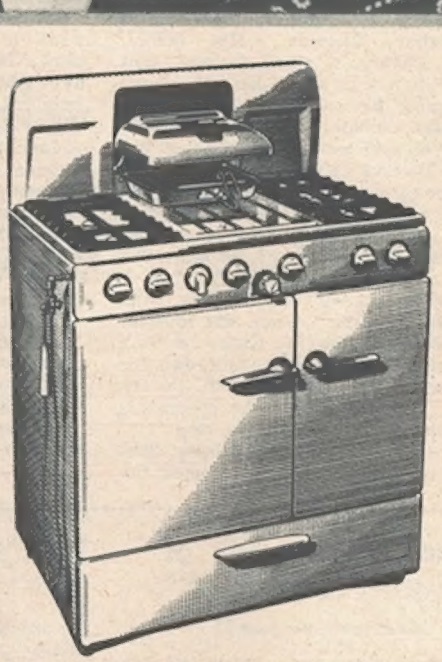
Low-priced family cooker



A well-designed cooker with four high-speed burners and grill, storage compartment, double plate-rack and drop-type door. £31. 18. 8

If space is a problem

This compact cooker is ideal where space is limited. The semi-circular hotplate bars keep pans extra firm, and there's a handy shelf below the oven. £20 *(lighter extra)*



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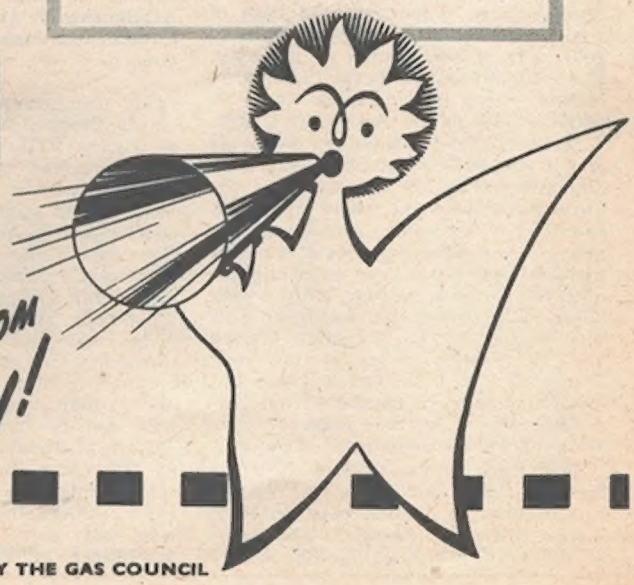
This cooker is only 32½" wide (excluding taper) —but has a full-sized oven, large folding "comfort-level" grill, warming chamber and useful storage compartment. Here is sheer large-cooker luxury in the smallest possible space. With auto-ignition and oven taper, £63. 16. 0 *cash —or on Mr. Therm's Easy Terms.*



ISSUED BY THE GAS COUNCIL

Kneel, pray—and punch

Continued from page 21

on national and municipal election days has lent his prestige to routing out voters on her behalf.

Mrs. Braddock, who is president of the Professional Boxers' Association as well as Labour Member of Parliament for Liverpool Exchange, speaks authoritively on fighters. "I have seen most of them," she says, "and Hogan gives the highest exposition of the game. At the same time he's the gentlest lad you could hope to meet."

Bassey's mild demeanour—he is so polite that he thanks autograph hunters—misled Goldie Ahearne, the American promoter who sponsored the match where the Nigerian won his chance to fight for the title.

"That boy of yours is awfully quiet," Ahearne told Biddles when they met. "Can he really fight?"

"He's savage," Biddles replied with managerial overstatement. Ahearne's reaction was a demand that Bassey should appear in a leopard skin carrying a spear. It took all Biddles's persuasive powers to convince the American that the young Nigerian's savagery was entirely professional, and that in all his life he had never seen a lion.

Bassey's lack of natural savagery has been his greatest handicap and he has had to will himself to finish off an opponent. Even today, the champion will unleash punches at a sparring partner and then step back as if surprised at the havoc created by his blows.

Bassey Hogan Bassey, as he appears on his passport, was born on June 3, 1932, in the once infamous slave centre of Calabar, Nigeria. His father, Asuquo Bassey, a small farmer, sent the boy to Lagos when he was eleven to complete his schooling.

Douglas Collister, a former resident in Nigeria and now a member of the British Boxing Board of Control, recalls seeing young Bassey fighting in the streets of Lagos. "He had a block of ice," Collister says, "and a gang of youngsters took it away from him. But what a scrap he put up!"

Although Bassey was staying with his uncle, William Cowan, the founder of the Nigerian Boxing Club, he took no interest in the sport. One day his uncle sent him to the club on an errand. There some of the spectators dared the boy to step into the ring.

His opponent thrashed Bassey but, instead of quitting, the boy joined the club to master self-defence. At sixteen and still a student, he had won the professional flyweight championship of Nigeria and a purse of £40.

From school the young champion went to the War Department as a clerk. He kept on boxing and won the flyweight and later the bantamweight championships of West Africa. When he was nineteen an admirer advanced him the money to seek his fortune in Britain.

Bassey landed at Liverpool on December 9, 1951, grey with seasickness, cold and homesickness. He was horrified when he discovered that his breath emerged as steam. On shore his new manager, Peter Banasko, took him to buy his first overcoat.

Banasko and Bassey toured Britain, taking fights where they could find them and sleeping in trains or on railway platforms to save hotel bills.

Johnny Best, the Liverpool promoter, remembers driving Bassey home after a contest in Leeds in which he was outpointed by a Belgian, Pierre Cossemyns. Hoping to cheer up his subdued passenger, Best remarked that he thought the decision unfair.

"No, Mr. Best," Bassey replied. "The other boy won. It was close but the other boy won."

Bassey built up a reputation slowly. After beating McCarthy he lost to Billy Kelly of Belfast, largely through failure to punish an opponent after gaining the initial advantage.

It took another two years after his defeat by Kelly before Bassey got into the ring with the Irishman again and relieved him of his British Empire featherweight championship. Bassey relinquished the title last month to concentrate on defending his world championship.

Harry Ormesher, a St. Helens bookmaker who has interested himself in Bassey's career, accompanied him to Belfast for the Kelly fight. "Hogan had no worries about the outcome," Ormesher says, "but he was concerned about a shop where on a previous visit he had been undercharged twenty shillings. As soon as we got to Belfast he insisted on going to the shop, pointing out the error and paying the pound."

The British Empire title did not enhance Bassey's career to any marked extent. One of his 1956 fights earned him only £152 and when his manager's contract, with twelve months to go, was offered for sale the first bid was only £200.

"It was an insult to me," says Bassey in one of his rare displays of indignation.

George Biddles bought the contract for £600, a sum quickly recovered by his share of Bassey's subsequent victories.

Leaving his nine-month-old son in Liverpool, Bassey took his wife to Paris for the world-title fight against Hamia.

He confused French boxing critics with his gentle treatment of sparring partners and by ceasing training four days before he was due to appear in the ring.

The French overlooked the fact that Nigeria's two chief ministers, Nnamdi Azikiwe and Obasami Awolowo, were in the arena to watch their champion. When the fight was won, the two ministers in their flowing robes climbed into the ring and embraced Bassey.

The new world champion got to bed at 4 a.m. and spent the remainder of the night refighting the battle. He notified his supporters in Liverpool of the train on which he was returning, deliberately took an earlier one and eluded the reception committee.

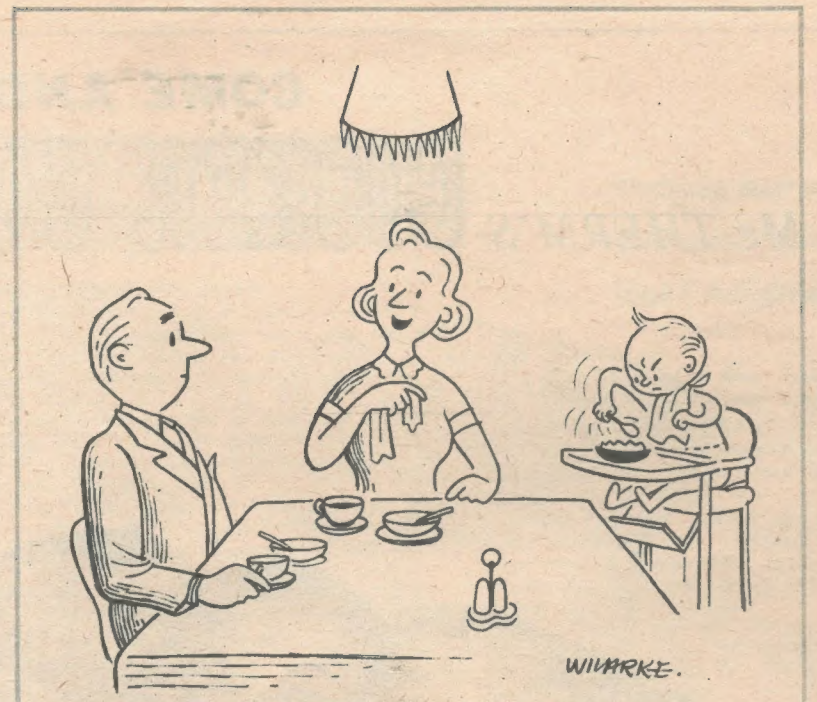
"We found Hogan finally," Johnny Best says. "He was tucking into curry at his mother-in-law's home."

A civic reception was organized and later Mrs. Braddock took Bassey to the House of Commons where he was presented to Sir Winston Churchill. The shy champion was ill at ease on both occasions.

Even at informal gatherings Bassey seldom discusses his ring triumphs. Not long ago, says Mrs. Braddock, the champion spent an evening with a number of Liverpool boxers. They regaled each other with accounts of their experiences as fighters.

"One of the boys," she says, "asked Hogan to tell them his most exciting moment. His face broke into a broad grin as he replied, 'When I go to hospital—see my baby. He belong to me.'"

THE END



"I know he doesn't like it but at least it doesn't splash"

The fabulous life of Father Christmas

Continued from page 25

Robin Hood tactics of robbing the rich to give to the poor, but because of his sympathy for those imprisoned, having been for so long in prison himself.

Having spent much of his life giving money to those in need, he quite naturally became the patron saint of moneylenders, who later developed Lombardy as a great centre of finance. As the story of Nicholas's gifts to the three daughters was handed down from generation to generation, the bags of gold became in some versions balls of gold, a very old symbol of integrity. The device of medieval Lombardy became three golden balls, and this persists today as the pawnbrokers' sign.

Nicholas died on December 6—in 345 or 352; the date is uncertain—and that day still marks the beginning of the Christmas season in many European countries. There was a genuine veneration of him after his death and his tomb attracted more and more pilgrims until the eleventh century, when a split occurred between the Latin-speaking western half of the Christian Church and the Greek-speaking eastern half. The tomb was in the Greek sphere but in 1087 a party of mariners from Bari in Italy set out in three ships for Myra and removed the remains of Nicholas.

The three ships reached Bari on May 9, 1087, and there the remains rest to this day. Each year, in May, a great festival is observed. The statue of the saint is carried far out to sea in a boat, followed by other craft. When night falls, they return to Bari, which is full of quaintly dressed pilgrims. Amid rejoicing, the statue is carried to each church in the town, finally coming to rest in the church dedicated to the saint and built to contain his remains.

The medieval St. Nicholas who makes his yearly appearance on December 6 in many parts of Europe is the very opposite of the demons who accompany him—stern but just, and kindly to the deserving. He became known as Santa Klaus or Santa Claus from Bavarian or German-Swiss children's lisping of Sanct Herr Nikolaus. His habiliments in Austria are those of the Church—the bishop's mitre, cope and crozier.

The commemoration of St. Nicholas was dropped in England at the time of Henry VIII and although it was briefly revived under Mary, who was Roman Catholic, St. Nicholas disappeared from popular lore in the reign of Elizabeth I. Another figure persisted, however, in the folk drama; this was Father Christmas — not exactly a pagan, but a secular, character. In the nineteenth century he became associated with the *Weihnachtsmann*—or Christmas Eve man, as the *Christkind* became called in northern Germany—rather than with St. Nicholas. The fact that he became very popular in Britain at about the same time as the fir tree came from Germany suggests that he might have been introduced by Prince Albert, the Prince Consort. This was not so. Albert's enthusiastic acceptance of Father Christmas and the Christmas tree in the Royal household made them more popular, but both arrived in Britain before his marriage to Queen Victoria.

Moore, when he wrote his poem for children, called his visitor St. Nicholas, but he took a lot of liberties with the saint. He changed his date to December 24 from December 6. As for the character himself, an ascetic bishop became a jolly old elf. Moore did not invent Santa Claus, but he gave him his modern form, and what he began was carried on by Thomas Nast, a Bavarian by origin, who settled in New York in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Among the American artists who took up the theme of Christmas, Nast was the most appealing. He insisted to the last that the figure he drew *was* St. Nicholas but in his drawings the saint can be seen developing from a small elf-like creature, much as Moore described him, to the jovial Santa Claus of today.

Nast's Santa and Father Christmas managed to combine about the end of the last century, without anyone noticing the fact. Santa Claus now wears Father Christmas's fur-lined hooded cloak. He has arrived at the point where he serves the needs of parents, and there he sticks. He might be in some danger of becoming merely utilitarian, but a new interest can always revive his magic.

Perhaps his greatest shot in the arm came from Rudolph. In 1939 an American mail order firm advertised their Christmas stock by giving away two million copies of a poem, "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer."

It captured the imagination of America's children as nothing since Dr. Moore's poem had done. Rudolph, because of his ridiculous red nose, was the outcast of the reindeer community when, on a dark Christmas Eve, he was called in by Santa to lead the team of reindeer so that his glistening nose would light the way. Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer was accepted into popular American culture with as much enthusiasm as any folk-hero of the past.

He was brought out again after the war in 1946, and in 1949 a popular song was written about him. Then he became a film star. How strong his hold on children became is shown by what happened in Milwaukee one winter's night in 1950 when a huntsman who had shot a buck drove up to an inn with the animal tied to the side of his car.

He parked his car and went inside for a drink and to boast about his hunting exploits. After a time one of his bored listeners slipped out, found a pot of red paint and daubed some on the animal's nose. Then he called to a passing group of boys. "Look," he said. "Rudolph!"

He slipped back into the inn, and presently the huntsman came out to drive home. A volley of snowballs, stones, bricks and anything handy met him. Most of the boys of the neighbourhood were entrenched near the car, and burning for vengeance. "He escaped with his life," recorded the *Milwaukee Journal*.

But he had learned something of the lengths to which children will go in defence of a legend, even when they do not believe it.

THE END

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3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover Bullets in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed at 6d. per Bullet. Make P.O. payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated.
4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that result of this Contest (in JOHN BULL dated January 18), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.
(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, December 28, for early news of Bullets No. 2,120 result.)

POST ENTRY: Bullets No. 2,120, "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.99

HOW TO WIN A "TELECHEQUE"

ADD 2, 3 or 4 WORDS to any EXAMPLE

HERE'S how to shape a Bullet. First, grasp the broad idea by enjoying the latest winners. Then choose as your starting-point any Example from list on right. To it, add TWO, THREE or FOUR words to make the whole into a bright Bullet.

Miss 1958
On The Economic Ice
The Miner's Lamp
With America's Help
To Keep Out The Cold
The Next Satellite
Weary Housewife
Nature Hit Back And
Too Much Noise
Wide-eyed With Wonder
That Little Tot
Together
Human H-bomb
Mile After Mile
Trouble In The Prison
Sleek And Slinky
Brrr! Went The Alarm And
Artist Alfie
Queer Goings-on
Wobbling At The Knees

Last six Examples are incomplete: if you wish to use one, first complete it with a word of your choice—then make your Bullet as usual.

.....Of The Nation
Will Soon Be.....
The Jones's New.....
Terrifying.....
"Look, No..... !"
As If.....Wasn't Enough

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"BULLETS" No. 2,115—FIRST PRIZE, £700 plus £125 Christmas Shopping Weekend, or £800 lump sum: C. T. Sterne, 29 Vine Street, Newton Heath, Manchester:

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£25: Miss B. M. Holland, 2 Somerset Street, Llandudno: OVERWHELMED—AND OUTRAGED—AMERICA, *Outranged*!

OTHER AWARDS: £10: R. Dent, 141 Harper's Lane, Chorley, Lancs: CHRISTMAS SHOPPING — GIVES *You* "LITTLE SOMETHING." £9: Mrs. W. L. Palmer, 29 Grange Street, Port Talbot: IT'S TIME WE ADVANCED AND—PAID SCIENTISTS LIKE—*Comedians*! £8: Richford, 5 Arthur Road, Bexhill-on-Sea: A BIT OF OLD PAGEANTRY—*And* NEW TECHNOLOGY—BRITAIN! £7: C. Sheppard, 5 Mill Lane, Pebmarsh, Halstead, Essex: MAKES ME LIFT—MY CHIN, MY "CHINA"! £6: A. Alexander, 21 Fortescue Road, Bournemouth: A BIT OF OLD SANTA—STILL, IN "DISILLUSIONED" DAD. £5: W. W. Ellis, "Meadowview," Andersonstown, Belfast: MAKES ME FEEL—MY AGE—UNFEELING YOUTH! £5: Mrs. C. Ratcliffe, 23 Surrey Hamlet, Coggeshall: DOLLARS—POUNDS—FRANCS—MELTED DOWN INTO *Steel*?

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